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17 and Counting

Sydney FC stars Alvin Ceccoli (left) and Socceroo bound striker Sasho Petrovski salute their unbeaten record of 17 games without a loss.
(Turn to pages 6 and 11 for more)

GALA DAY SUCCESS AT PARKLEA

A-League star Dwight Yorke was the main attraction along with his team-mates during last Sunday's Soccer NSW-Sydney FC Gala Day held at Valentine Park.
Yorke and company signed and posed for photos as 1000 plus fans flocked to see the glamour team.
(Read more on Page 13)

FARINA A FLYING EAGLE?

Former Socceroo boss Frank Farina is said to be on the coaching list of NSW club Parramatta Eagles - could this be true? turn to page 13 for the rest of the story

A-LEAGUE PRE SEASON CUP REPORTS

(pages 9-12)

ENGLISH 2005/2006 PREMIER LEAGUE FIXTURES

(BACK PAGE)

A MASSIVE 32 PAGES THIS WEEK

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aussiesabroad

BY Mark Stavroulakis

Bankstown City Lions defender **Matthew Pressello** last Thursday departed Sydney for Holland with one thing on his mind, securing a professional contract.

Pressello has been invited by BV Veendam FC to take part in a three-week trial which will see him go through various tests by the Dutch second division side.

The squad will be in camp in Odoorn where Pressello will call home for now.

Matthew Pressello: Bankstown City Lions defender has jetted to Holland for trials

The defender was one of the Lions most consistent players during their championship winning season this year.

★★★★★

Australian forward **Cameron Pino** is hoping to secure a deal with Grimsby after joining the Mariners on trial.

Pino, who has played for Altona Magic in the Victorian Premier League, can play as a striker or midfielder.

"It's been going well," he told the club's official website.

"They seem like a good bunch of lads. I've been speaking to the manager and he seems like a good manager, and he seems to know what he's after.

"I've always wanted to play in England. I've played in South America and Seville, but I've always wanted to try my luck here."

★★★★★

Australian **Tim Cahill** has rejected Everton's lucrative offer of a new contract after stalled negotiations.

Cahill, 25, turned down the extension on his current contract that runs for the next three years at Goodison park.

Everton officials were keen to reward the exciting new Australian sensation who scored 11 goals in his debut season for the Toffees.

However, Cahill's agent and Everton were unable to agree on a long-term contract that Everton hoped would prevent potential bigger English clubs poaching for their key play maker.

Cahill's decision has stunned Everton officials, saying: "I was keen to commit my future but it seems that won't be possible." reported BBC Sport. He added:

"I'm very disappointed we have not been able to agree terms." Everton chief executive Keith Wyness was quick to remind Everton fans it will continue with talks, "We have been in discussions with Tim Cahill and he's still got three years left to run on his current contract.

"Talks will continue and we will continue to view all options open to us. Tim did exceptionally well for us last season. He does have three years left to run but we want him to be with us for a long time."

★★★★★

Australia international goalkeeper **Michael Petkovic** has left his club, Trabzonspor.

Petkovic, who played for Australia in last month's Confederations Cup, is remaining in Turkey and has joined newly promoted Sivasspor.

The 29 year-old shot-stopper has signed a two-year contract with Sivasspor. He has been playing with Trabzonspor since 2002.

★★★★★

Hartlepool boss Martin Scott has rewarded Australia international **Joel Porter** for his recent good form by extending his contract with the League One club.

The 26-year-old was one of Pools' outstanding performers last season, netting 16 goals as the club narrowly missed out on promotion and has now committed his long-term future to Victoria Park.

"I'm delighted another member of the squad has committed himself to an extended contract," Scott told the club's official website.

"I feel it is important that the players who have performed well for the club in recent years get extended contracts because Joel has shown what an excellent talent he is and he is a player who can certainly play at a higher level.

"This just shows how well things are running at the club and that the players can see the club is progressing forward."

★★★★★

Australian skipper **Craig Moore** has completed his move to Newcastle on a two-year contract, the English Premiership club announced.

The 29-year-old defender was a free agent after leaving Borussia Monchengladbach after previous spells at Rangers and Crystal Palace.

"I've watched the Premiership for many years and it's always been a place where I would like to play," said Moore.

"I am really delighted to be given this opportunity.

"I don't feel as if I'm an old player, I think 29 is a good age. It's an extremely tough league but one I'm really looking forward to playing in."

The player's agent, John Viola, confirmed that the deal would keep Moore at St James' Park until the summer of 2007.

"He's delighted with the move," said Viola.

Northampton's Aussie defender Pedj Bojic (left) battles with Birmingham City's Mehdi Nafti during last week's friendly clash

Moore has passed a medical and will renew his defensive partnership with former Rangers team-mate Jean-Alain Boumsong at Newcastle.

Moore spent 11 seasons at Ibrox, split by a six-month spell with Palace, and joined Monchengladbach in January.

He inherits the number 18 shirt formerly worn by Aaron Hughes, who joined Aston Villa this summer, and although he has been signed too late to play in the Intertoto Cup, should Newcastle turn around a 2-1 deficit and oust Deportivo La Coruna, before winning their final, Moore would be able to play from the first round of the UEFA Cup onwards.

★★★★★

New Alaves signing **John Aloisi** made a desperate last ditch plea to resurrect a failed move to Portsmouth, it has been revealed.

The News says Aloisi contacted Pompey chairman Milan Mandaric in a bid to revive his return to the club after his proposed move to Panathinaikos collapsed.

A two-year deal on wages of around £15,000 a week was on the table for the 29-year-old, but he hiked those demands to £30,000 a week after hitting four goals against Germany and Argentina for Australia in last month's Confederations Cup.

That left Mandaric stunned and wrecked any chances of a return to the club where he hit 29 goals in 68 games from 1997 to 1998.

But Aloisi's big-money move to Greece then collapsed because of a knee problem and Mandaric gave the striker short shrift when he received a call to ask if he was still keen to secure his services.

★★★★★

Northampton's Aussie defender **Pedj Bojic** has started off on the best possible foot after his League Two side defeated Premier League outfit Birmingham City one-nil.

Bojic played the full 90 minutes and marked Birmingham striker Mehdi Nafti out of the game.

★★★★★

Former Young Socceroo midfielder **Carl Valeri** has been handed trials at English Championship League side Derby County.

Currently off contract with Italian Serie A side Inter Milan, Valeri failed to win a contract at newly promoted Dutch Eredivise side Heracles Almelo.

Australian Lindsay Wilson recently had trials at Derby but failed to win a deal at the English club.

★★★★★

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Don Bosco Youth Centre — Mamre Road, St Marys

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Kim Meincke 0412 870 774 ph/fax 9670 4289

MARINERS THRILLED BY LOCAL SUPPORT

Central Coast Mariners Executive Chairman Lyall Gorman has reaffirmed his thoughts on the future of top flight football on the Central Coast in light of the Mariners outstanding results off the pitch at last weekend's Pre-Season Cup tie with Sydney FC.

The 8,362 spectators contributed to the carnival atmosphere at the Mariners, picturesque bay side home, as the Mariners battled with their local rivals in an entertaining and enjoyable ninety minutes of high-octane football.

"Any doubts about the Hyundai A-League having a home on the Central Coast were dispelled against Sydney," said Mr. Gorman.

"Saturday night's attendance shows just how much this team means to this community and we know that it's only going to get bigger and better from here."

The Mariners gate was the best of any Hyundai A-League side in round two of the Pre-Season Cup.

Further to this, 8,362 is also a greater figure than the one announced at Central Coast Stadium on Wednesday night, when the NSW Waratahs hosted Auckland in a Rugby Union trial.

"This strong evidence of local support for the Mariners is encouraging for local investors and corporate sponsors within and outside the Central Coast community," said Mr. Gorman.

"Including the midweek Rugby Union fixture, the Central Coast market has been asked to attend three matches within a week and they've responded amazingly.

"Saturday, and previous matches at Central Coast Stadium, augur well for a fantastic start to our Hyundai A-League campaign on September 4, where we expect to see our crowd numbers swell even higher than they have so far."

Sydney FC may face Liverpool

Liveprool will take on either Sydney FC or Costa Rica's Deportivo Saprissa in the FIFA Club World Championship in December after last week'sdraw in Tokyo.

European champions Liverpool were seeded and will join the revamped six-team competition at the semi-final stage along with Brazil's Sao Paulo, holders of the Libertadores Cup.

Oceania representatives Sydney FC, established only last year, were relishing a potential semi-final against Liverpool.

"Liverpool would be a dream date for us," Sydney's director of football Andy Harper said.

"We are under no illusions. It will be difficult to get to the semi-finals. But Liverpool are a massive club and we would love a crack at them.

"Australia is still a colony in a lot of ways so playing against the motherland will be like the (cricket series) Ashes revisited."

Sydney are coached by former Germany international Pierre Littbarski and earlier this year signed former Manchester United forward Dwight Yorke.

"It will definitely be a step up for us," said Harper. "But you can't understate the size of the impact these games will have back home."

South American champions Sao Paulo still do not know the identity of their opponents in December as both the Asian and African competitions have yet to be decided.

Sao Paulo won the World Club Cup, between the champions of South America and Europe, in 1992 and 1993.

Liverpool were beaten 3-0 by Brazil's Flamengo in 1981 and 1-0 by Argentina's Independiente in 1984.

Soccer's governing body FIFA staged the first world club championship five years ago in Brazil but pulled the plug on the competition in 2001 after the collapse of its marketing partner ISMM/ISL.

The winners of the new tournament in Japan from December 11-18 competition receive $US4.5 million ($5.94 million) in prize money.

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Under 20s Trials

The above club is currently seeking players for the 2005/2006 Under 20s A.P.I.A. Leichhardt – Pistoiese Football Academy squad.

The Academy squad will compete in this coming summer's elite Under 20s NSW Premier League competition.

This team will also participate in the prestigious 58th Annual Viareggio Tournament in Italy in February 2006.
Trial dates are as follows:
EVERY MONDAY NIGHT
All trials will begin at 6:30pm at Lambert Park, Leichhardt
Cnr Marion & Foster Streets, Leichhardt
Players must arrive by 5:45pm.

For further information and enquiries call John Romeo, Technical Director of the A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Youth Football Academy on 0412-808-114

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Applications close 8th August 2005

SENIOR COACHING APPOINTMENTS MACARTHUR DISTRICT

Applicants are being sought for the following Senior Appointments for Macarthur District;

- Senior Youth League Coach (Boys)
- Girls Youth League/Development Coach
- 1st Grade Coach Womens Super League

We welcome applicants from both within the current Macarthur ranks and external to Macarthur. These are leadership roles and the successful candidates will need to demonstrate:

- appropriate formal qualifications
- leadership/team building abilities
- development focus
- excellent communication skills
- professional attitude
- ability to work with the Board and other coaches
- practical success

Macarthur is currently and will continue to be a major Youth growth centre. The current Board is very progressive in it s goals for Youth Development and achieving success for the Macarthur Region.

Interest applicants should send their details indicating the positions they are interested in to:
COACH – Board of Directors
Macarthur District Soccer Football Association
PO Box 951 CAMPELLTOWN NSW 2560
Fax: (02) 4628 0517
Email: mdsfa@bigpond.com.au

Queries can be directed to Rob Burns on 0418 662 903
Applications close Monday 15th August at 5.00pm

All successful candidates will be screened as required by the NSW Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998

TO ALL PAST PLAYERS of the HOLLANDIA, LIONS, BRISBANE & QUEENSLAND LIONS SOCCER CLUBS

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Yes, we are starting an organization to cater for past players, team officials and administrators who were involved with the above clubs during 47 seasons of senior Soccer (1957 – 2005).

Jim Hermiston: Rock solid central defender

An interim committee, consisting of Henk Mollee, Henk Bakker, Col Bennett, Steve Jackson, Luke Farinazzo and Simon Boegheim, has accepted the challenge and we have formed an 'organization' called the 'Pride of Lions' which will be offering membership to everyone in the above categories.

Some of 'Prides' objectives are:

✔ Establish a data base of all eligible members.

✔ Keep members informed on a regular and frequent basis of all activities of Queensland Roar, Queensland Lions and Pride of Lions.

✔ Encourage members to participate in those activities.

✔ Organize functions for 'Pride' members.

✔ Negotiate special 'membership' and 'ticketing' packages, particularly for events organized by the Roar.

✔ Procure memorabilia, press clippings, programs etc. to be accessible to the members.

Col Bennett: Former Australian International centre back.

✔ Establish a 'Hall of Fame'

The 'committee's' immediate priorities are to:

✔ Set up a data base.

✔ Organize a 'Players' Reunion.

To help with this data base, please complete the attached questionaire / profile either on this web site for electronic transmission or the attached copy to be either mailed or faxed.

Our first function, the 'Players' Reunion will require your immediate attention, because it is happening very soon.

A notice with all the relevant details and ticket order form is attached and because, over the years, many players and supporters have shown a very strong interest in an event of this nature, we expect and hope for a sell out.

Your committee hopes that you will register your interest in joining 'Pride of LIons' (at this stage at no cost) and we look forward to receiving both your completed questionaire / profile and ticket order form post haste.

Ray Richards: Former Australian World Cup midfielder

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Dez Giraldi lone Aussie at Empoli

By Joe Russo

Empoli, once to home to five Australian players, will for the first time in several years be without an Australian player in either their first or under 20 teams.

It is only a short while ago that Empoli boasted Marco Bresciano, Vince Grella, Frank Lagana, Nick Stavroulakis and Dez Giraldi in their squads.

However, with Giraldi's loan to the Serie C club, Cuoio Pelli Cappiano, there will be no Aussie boys at Empoli at the start of the new season.

Dez Giraldi is now the only Australian at the Empoli stables

Speaking recently on radio to Sunday Night Soccer on 98.5 FM, Giraldi highlighted this fact.

"At one stage there were five of us," he said. "Nick Stavroulakis and Frank Lagana both moved on, and Mark [Bresciano] and Vince [Grella] were sold to Parma. At the moment I am here on my own.

"I have been here for 18 months and I have two years left on my contract, but they have put me out on loan to Serie C side Cuoio Pelli Cappiano which is a good sign.

"I am hoping to get a bit of experience there and hopefully come straight back into the first team [at Empoli]."

Empoli, who have been promoted from the Serie B back to the Serie A for the upcoming season, preferred to lend out the talented striker despite him earning rave reviews in various Italian newspapers.

Giraldi told listeners that his participation in the prestigious Coppa Carnevale (under 20) tournament in Viareggio, where he scored the only goal in Empoli's win over Maccabi Haifa, was one the highlights for him in 2005.

"The Viareggio was a great experience but we didn't do as well as we would have liked," he said.

"Overall, I enjoyed my game [last season] and I learnt a lot with the professionalism of the club."

Giraldi was asked to describe life in Italy; including the reality which is often different to the perception that life in Europe as a professional footballer is glamorous.

"It is tough. People want to tell you how good your life is but they don't understand everything else we are missing out on," he said.

"I am living on my own and I've got my family back in Australia, but I wouldn't be here if I didn't want to and, at the end of the day, I am prepared to sacrifice everything back in Australia to be successful."

Giraldi was not selected for Australia's recent under 20 team which participated in the World Youth Championships in Holland and, while disappointed, he accepted the decision of the Australian team management very professionally.

"It was disappointing and it's not so much Ange [Postecoglou]'s fault or anyone who is selecting the team," he said. "Most of the problems come from deeper and it makes it hard for anyone to follow up my progress.

"I felt more disappointed from the fact that I wasn't even looked at [in Italy] and I didn't get to go into any of the camps," he concluded.

Sunday Night Soccer is on radio at 10.00pm every Sunday in Sydney on 98.5FM.

TEAM OF THE WEEK

SMITHFIELD UNDER 9's

***ABSW* this week kicked off its new 32-page edition in style going back to its roots by culminating the best news, stories and issues from Australia and from around the world.**

A new section has opened up, team of the week, which readers can email to us a small story and photo on their respected club.

If you have an all-star all age team you want the whole of Australia to know about or your kids are doing well in their junior squads, drop us an email at absw@foreignlanguage.com.au with the title 'Team of the Week'.

Smithfield club President Roy Perre would be a really pleased man after seeing the efforts of the club's under 9's side during this season's Southern District's knockout Shield.

The talented U9's team have won all pre season trial games and also won recently the Fairfield City Cup final against Marconi.

They are currently leading the competition in the Southern District and have only conceded two goals in the league so far, and we though Chelsea's defence was rock solid.

One of the biggest achievements for the young side was when they won the Southern District knockout Shield in the Final which was held at Marconi Stadium 1-0 against AC United.

At a U9s gala day at Croydon Park, the young boys played strong division one teams from around Sydney and Terrigal that were in the top four of their comps in each district and you guessed it, Smithfield RSL won every game.

Smithfield went on to win the final 7-2 against Queens Park and won the cup.

I think we could certainly see some great talent arise from this squad coached by Mark Diacono and Joe Florio who are doing an excellent job with these talented young kids .

To find out more about this up and coming squad, you can surf the website on www.smithfieldsoccer.com

The victorious Smithfield U9s side after winning the Southern District's Shield Final

EUROPEAN HEAVYWEIGHTS SHOW US THE WAY

By Marc Fox

For some time, modern football clubs have appreciated the plentiful commercial opportunities that exist across the Asian region. A snapshot of the recent itinerates of Europe's elite reiterates their belief in the value of targeting this lucrative Far Eastern market.

To start with, Manchester United completed its money-spinning four-match tour of Hong Kong, China and Japan on Saturday (July 30). At the same time, Spurs were pipping the likes of Olympique Lyon, PSV Eindhoven, Real Sociedad and Boca Juniors to the Peace Cup in Korea. Also in action in Bangkok, UEFA Cup qualifiers Bolton Wanderers were beating a Thailand selection in the FA Premier League Asia Trophy final, a round-robin competition also featuring Everton and Manchester City

Well-rehearsed spokesmen of the clubs in question will point to the merits of building fitness and team morale ahead of August's European kick-offs. But there is little coincidence that the clubs involved in tours around Asia are the ones with local players on display. Chinese starlet Dong Fangzhou made a scoring debut in Hong Kong for Manchester United, who also started with recent South Korean capture Park Ji-Sung. Meanwhile, spectators at the Peace Cup would have enjoyed watching fellow South Koreans Lee Young-Pyo (PSV) and Lee Chun-Soo (Real Sociedad) in action. In Bangkok, Chinese internationals Li Tie of Everton and Sun Jihai of Manchester City were also featuring for the Premiership sides.

Tapping into the commercial spin-offs in a football-mad region like Asia is viewed as a valid and profitable method of boosting finances.

It has been reported that when Everton and Manchester City meet in the Premier League, 120 million Chinese viewers tune in to watch. While it might be a little early to discuss brand building outside Australian shores for our fledgling A-League clubs, given the imminent relocation of Football Federation Australia to the AFC, commercial possibilities loom large. And arguably the teams best placed to capitalise are those with Asian players among their ranks.

Of the six Asian stars to have been snapped up by A-League clubs – Japanese duo Hiroyuki Ishida (Perth Glory) and Naoki Imaya (New Zealand Knights), Chinese pair Xiaobin Zhang (also of the Knights) and Shengqing Qu (pronounced "Chew" – Adelaide) and Queensland's Shin Tae-Young and Seo Hyuk-Su from South Korea – four are new to the Australian national league.

Asian A-Leaguers – Perth Glory's Hiroyuki Ishida (left) and Adelaide United's Shengqing Qu will be players to watch out for this season

Queensland CEO Lawrence Oudendyk admits that after the Roar's acceptance into the inaugural A-League, the club's proximity to Asia plus impending footballing links between the regions prompted them to purposely target it for prospective players. By nature of having the oldest professional league in Asia and a successful World Cup campaign in 2002, South Korea came out on top.

The playing pedigree of their new recruits speaks for itself. Seo is a combative defensive midfielder with seven seasons top-flight experience in Korea, while playmaker Shin is a veteran of two World Cups and former captain of K-League champions Seongnam Ilhwa.

Yet aside from all the pair can offer on the pitch in Queensland's push to make the finals in February, they also present sizeable off-field opportunities.

The most significant of these might be the potential for the Roar to become co-branded by the sponsor of a nominated K-League partner. Most Korean clubs are owned by Chaebol, giant conglomerates such as Hyundai, Samsung and LG who play a major role in keeping the domestic league afloat. Given Hyundai's enthusiastic backing of the A-League here in Australia, this could be a realistic goal. Any future sponsorship opportunities, though, would depend on developing the club's reputation, perhaps by the Roar proving they can hold their own against the better K-League sides.

The chance to do so should arrive as early as January next year. The arrivals of Shin and Seo have helped cultivate connections with their Korean counterparts, to the point that Oudendyk expects K-League opposition to visit Queensland as part of their pre-season preparations.

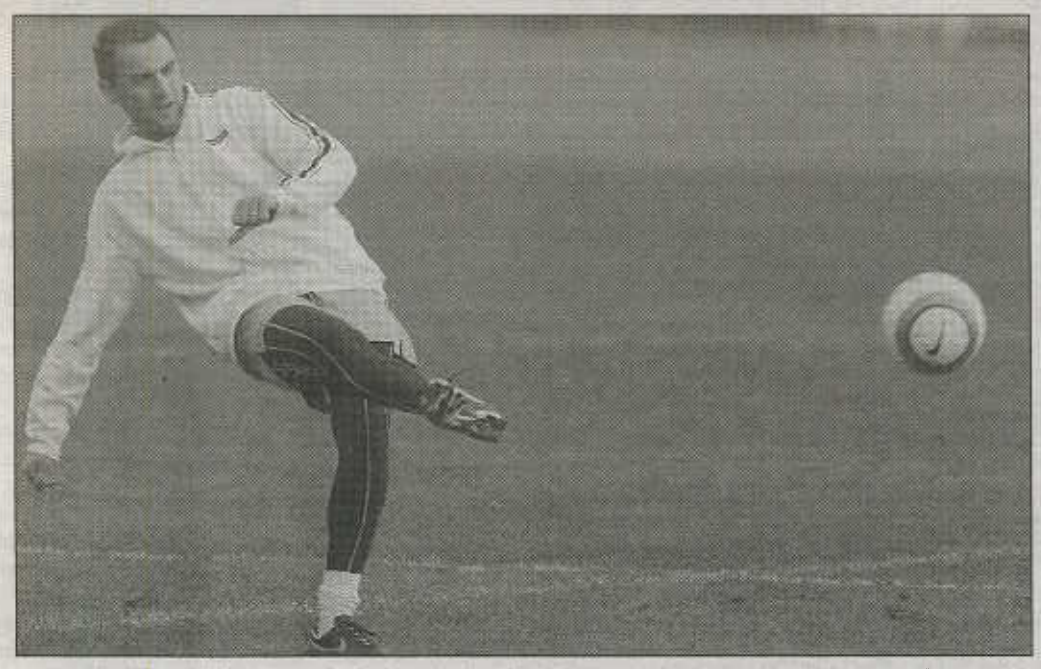
In exchange, the Roar is planning a 7-10 day return trip in April or May in which they plan to take on two Korean clubs. Although revenue generated from such trips would be small at this early stage, the chance to showcase the standard of Australia's new national league and gain Asia's acceptance would be invaluable.

A-League clubs might look to a working model already established by a club in England – but not Manchester United, Chelsea or Liverpool. No, arguably the greatest harvester of football links in Asia is League Two side Stockport County. New Zealand's Zhang will know all about their relationship with his homeland, having spent three seasons as a teenager in Greater Manchester. County owns a 50% share of the second division club Stockport Tiger Star, based in Shenyang, capital of the northern Liaoning province.

In 2004, four years after brokering the partnership, County turned in a profit for the first time. Pre-season tours constituted a large part of these earnings but player exchanges have also helped to balance the books. A number of young Chinese players have been bought to England's lower league, most notably Zhang who went on to represent China at the Athens Olympics.

While tours by the European heavyweights will grab the headlines, the example set by Stockport County proves that clubs further down football's pecking order can still reap rewards in the world's most populous continent.

Muscat believed in Farina's choice



Melbourne Victory skipper Kevin Muscat too Farina's advice in returning to Australia this season

Kevin Muscat has revealed that he confided in former Australia coach Frank Farina before deciding to quit Millwall and head back to Melbourne.

The former Millwall and Rangers defender said it was only when he was told by Farina that his place in the national team squad was not in jeopardy by turning his back on Europe that he decided to return to home.

"Anyone who thought that me leaving English soccer and deciding to come back and be part of the redevelopment of the game here meant I had given up on my international ambitions could not be more wrong," Muscat told the Melbourne Age newspaper.

"I discussed the wisdom of the move with the previous coach Frank Farina and asked whether it would hurt my Socceroo prospects if I left Millwall and came back."

"I know from having been in England for 10 years that 99% of the time it is the overseas players who get picked for the team."

"Farina told me it wouldn't hurt me. Frankie has gone now, so obviously the situation has changed but my ambitions haven't."

Muscat said he was determined to play in the World Cup finals in Germany next year.

"I have captained my country and I know that is one of the highest honours you can get in any sport," he said.

"I have been part of two failed World Cup campaigns and I am desperate to play a part in this one."

Muscat also said he was delighted with the appointment of Dutchman Guus Hiddink as the new Socceroo supremo, even if it was at the expense of Farina.

"People are saying that with just a couple of months to go, Hiddink hasn't got enough time to make much of a difference but I don't agree," Muscat said.

"No there aren't many games and he has already cancelled one, against Colombia, to have a training camp so he can assert his authority and personality on the boys and tell us how he wants the team to play."

"I honestly don't think it's going to be a problem for him to get his message across even though the time is short."

LAPAGLIA'S TRUST IN SYDNEY FC

Australian actor and one of the major shareholders in Sydney FC Anthony LaPaglia has stated his high hopes of the so called 'glamour side' doing their thing in becoming THE team of the A-League this season.

Football has been a hobby for the Hollywood actor ever since he first knew how to kick a ball at his home in South Australia during his baby years.

A former Adelaide City and West Adelaide goalkeeper in the late 70's, LaPaglia rekindled his love for the game again this year after he invested in helping Sydney FC strive for success in the debut season for the competition.

So far, the actor has seen a slight example of great things to come for the club after Pierre Littbarski side qualified for the World Club Championships in Japan at the end of the year.

It is safe to say that in terms of marketing and advertising, Sydney FC have done their bit in getting their name out to the rest of Australia.

After the recruitment of Anthony, the famous luring of English Premier League star Dwight Yorke was the icing on the cake for the Sydney squad.

It is the marketing factor that LaPaglia believes will be something he will involve himself in the success of the club.

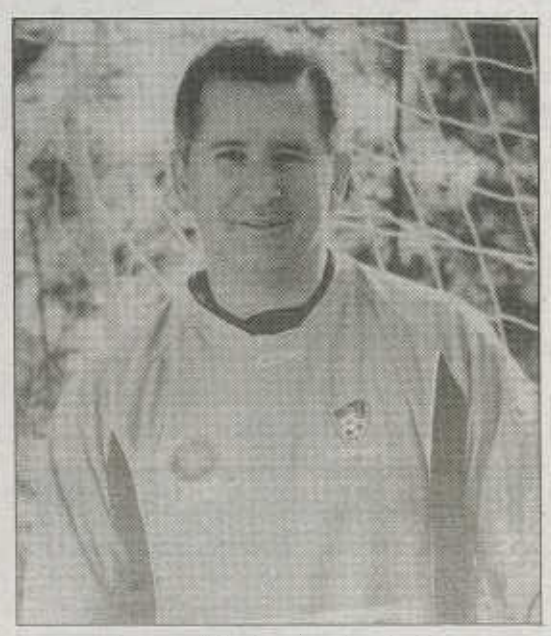
"I am in Australia as a whore to sell SFC because I love it. It's easy to sell something you believe in.

"I believe in this club and in the new A-League.

"I've whored myself for a lot less, trust me," he stated to the new 'Alpha' monthly magazine.

Whilst on his travels in the U.S. shooting for his next features on the big screen, the former goalkeeper will be updated daily on the fortunes of Sydney FC.

"When I'm back in the States I'll get to watch SFC's matches – they're going to FedEx a DVD to me every week."



Sydney FC's famous shareholder Anthony LaPaglia

Victorian Premier League

Ouliaris rescues Bergers

By Nick Dennis

Heidelberg grabbed an injury-time equaliser to salvage a 1-1 draw against Fawkner-Whittlesea at the Olympic Village on Sunday afternoon.

In the 96th minute, midfielder Tony Ouliaris scored with a header to cancel out Mark Tsiorlas' first half goal.

Heidelberg went into the game close to full strength for the first time in over a month. Only Goran Lozanovski remains sidelined, out indefinitely as he waits for two pins to be removed from his broken ankle. Fawkner were without injured Macedonian import, Jurica Siljanovski.

In the early stages of the game, Heidelberg struggled to deal with a well-drilled Fawkner offside trap, and were caught offside on four occasions in the opening fifteen minutes alone.

When the offside flag finally did stay down, in the 16th minute, Heidelberg striker Nick Marinos put his shot wide.

Just a few minutes later Fawkner hit the front. On the break Tony Sterjovski fired a dangerous cross in from the left.

Heidelberg keeper Lou Acevski elected to punch the ball away but it fell only as far as striker Mark Tsiorlas waiting on the edge of the box. Tsiorlas struck the ball firmly to put Fawkner ahead 1-0.

There was controversy in the 33rd minute when Heidelberg were awarded a free-kick well within midfielder Bill Damianos' range.

Fawkner survived his first attempt, but were ruled to have encroached and the free kick was re-taken. This time Damianos curled it past the wall, it hit the underside of the bar and rebounded into play.

The ball fell for Heidelberg striker Veton Korcarevski to tap in from a metre out. However the linesman's flag was up; apparently the ball had hit another Heidelberg player before falling to Korcarevski in an offside position, and the goal was disallowed.

With Fawkner allowing Heidelberg little time on the ball, the home team were finding it hard to create goal-scoring opportunities.

Their only other first half chance came just before the break. Brendan Beni crossed from the right, but Damianos' long range header from the edge of the box was always going wide.

Soon after the re-start, Fawkner were living dangerously when keeper Steven Tilovski came off his line to intercept a Damianos' free kick.

However the ball sailed past him and landed for Heidelberg's Daniel Jones to shoot from five metres. Fawkner defender John Angelovski saved the day with his clearance off the line.

Fawkner swept the ball upfield and Sterjovski found himself one-on-one with keeper Acevski, who did well to block the shot. Fawkner continued to look dangerous on the counter-attack.

In the 55th minute Sterjovski set up Ricky Chillico in front of goal. Chillico took an extra touch and was closed down by the defence, forcing his shot wide.

A couple of minutes later in a neatly worked move Tsiorlas laid the ball off for Chillico, who set up Zoran Petrevski, but the big striker blasted the ball over the bar.

Marinos had been well held for most of the game, but managed to momentarily break the defensive shackles.

He did well to hold off a defender in the box, only to scuff his shot. Fawkner again immediately counter-attacked, and again Acevski came to the rescue, saving from Chillico.

The game's turning point came in the 85th minute. A late tackle from Angelovski earned him a second yellow card and Fawkner were down to ten men. The send-off provided the momentum for Heidelberg to shift their attack up a gear.

Defender Robert Liparoti, who had pushed upfield to play as a third striker, put a header inches over the bar. Beni tried an audacious lob from 35 metres that cleared the back-tracking keeper but went just over the bar.

Then as the game entered injury time, Liparoti again won an aerial ball in the box, headed down for Marinos, but his shot was blocked by an excellent Tilovski save.

With six minutes of injury time played Heidelberg were awarded a free kick just inside the half way line.

Heidelberg keeper Acevski rushed forward to join the crowd of players waiting in the box. Sabljak's free kick could not have been struck better, Bergers midfielder Tony Ouliaris lept highest in the pack and his header found the back of the net, sparking wild celebrations amongst both players and fans.

Heidelberg coach Phil Stubbins said after the game, "Over the last four or five weeks with injuries and suspensions and a virus going around the club we've struggled a little bit. I think in today's performance we more than matched the form team of the league at the moment, and over the ninety minutes we had possibly the better of the chances.

"Fawkner are a very strong physical side with some experience in key positions, and that showed at times. But I was pleased with the way we went about our work".

In the game beforehand, the Fawkner-Whittlesea club had cause for celebration when their U21 squad secured the Championship.

Their 1-0 victory over the Heidelberg U21s gives them an unassailable lead over second-placed South Melbourne with just three rounds remaining.

VPL LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Green Gully Cavaliers	**22**	**11**	**8**	**3**	**25**	**14**	**41**
Heidelberg United	23	11	7	5	41	24	40
South Melbourne	23	11	7	5	25	14	40
Fawkner-Whittlesea	23	11	6	6	40	31	39
Preston Lions	23	9	8	6	38	28	35
Altona Magic	23	9	8	6	38	32	35
Oakleigh Cannons	23	9	7	7	42	29	34
Essendon Royals	23	9	6	8	29	27	33
Melbourne Knights	23	7	8	8	25	32	29
Frankston Pines	23	7	5	11	25	29	26
Bulleen Zebras	22	5	8	9	19	25	23
Sunshine Georgies	23	6	5	12	27	42	23
St Albans Saints	23	5	5	13	24	41	20
Bentleigh Greens	23	4	4	15	18	48	16

VPL RESULTS ROUND 24

Oakleigh Cannons 2
Sunshine Georgies 1

Frankston Pines 1
Preston Lions 0

Altona Magic 3
Melbourne Knights 0

Heidelberg United 1
Fawkner-Whittlesea 1

St Albans Saints 3
Bentleigh Greens 1

South Melbourne 1
Essendon Royals 1

Played Monday Result unknown at time of publication
Bulleen Zebras vs Green Gully Cavs

VPL TOP SCORERS

13 goals - M Curcija (ER)
10 goals: N Marinos (HU), J Sapazovski (PL), Z Petrevski, M Tsiorlas (F-W)
9 goals: T Neceski (SGX)
8 goals: S Oksuz (PL), V Coveny (SM)
7 goals: G Goutzioulis (OC), J Nilo (OC)

SUMMARY
by Nick Dennis

Oakleigh Cannons 2
Sunshine Georgies 1

After two costly losses Oakleigh got back on track with a battling 2-1 victory over Sunshine on Friday night.

Oakleigh took an early lead when the game was less than ten minutes old. Cannons striker Peter Kakos got on the end of a long ball, headed it across to strike partner Juan Nilo who headed home.

However by the 17th minute Sunshine were level again. Tony Neceski scored from the penalty spot after a clear handball in the area by Oakleigh captain Con Anthopoulos.

Sunshine's defensive limitations – they have the second worst defensive record in the league – were exposed in the 35th minute.

Nilo and Jim Drossos combined well on the left side of the box, and Drossos cut the ball back to Kakos.

With no defensive pressure on him Kakos was able to calmly slot the ball into the back of the net from 5 metres.

Sunshine almost fell a further goal behind two minutes later, again due to poor defending when they failed to clear a corner. However Nilo's shot was well saved by keeper Robert Brian.

Sunshine started to have more of the ball in the second half, but Oakleigh worked tirelessly in defence across the park to limit Sunshine's chances.

Altona Magic 3
Melbourne Knights 0

Hopes of a Melbourne Knights fairytale finish to the season were abruptly extinguished by an impressive Altona Magic on Saturday evening.

In front of a good crowd of over a 1,000 spectators, both teams played bright and entertaining football.

The difference lay in the defences: Altona were rock-solid and composed, while the Knights were guilty of some poor defending that cost them dearly.

After a tight opening 25 minutes, Altona defender Kole Delev pushed forward with the ball all the way into the box where he was clumsily brought down.

Referee Damir Basic pointed to the spot, and Marcus Stergiopoulos converted the penalty.

Five minutes later Altona were two goals up. This time it was Kole Delev's twin brother Koce exposing the Knights defence.

He skipped past a poor tackle to be one-on-one with the keeper, Adrian Cagalj. Cagalj forced Delev wide, but the Altona striker struck well from a tight angle to score.

In the 41st minute Altona's Pece Cergovski scored a brilliant individual goal to more or less settle the game.

From deep in his own half Cergovski won the ball and accelerated down the left flank.

He swerved past a defender and cut infield. Then from the edge of the box he fired the ball past the keeper to make it 3-0.

Altona put on an impressive defensive display in the second half to starve the Melbourne Knights of any meaningful chances to get back into the game.

Even the introduction of ex-NSL star Pablo Cardozo for the Knights failed to make an impact on the scoreboard, and Altona were able to keep what was only their second clean sheet of the season.

St Albans Saints 3
Bentleigh Greens 1

The stakes could not have been higher in this relegation battle between the two bottom sides, as whoever lost would almost certainly be playing State League football in season 2006.

St Albans took the lead after 15 minutes through young midfielder Metin Alibeyi.

Tolgay Ozbey continued his outstanding form for St Albans by scoring their second.

Bentleigh showed fight to get a goal back through Evan Papadopoulos with fifteen minutes remaining to set up an exciting finish.

However St Albans were able to withstand the Bentleigh comeback and striker Daniel Debevc's goal sealed the game.

As an indication of just how committed both teams were to the contest, two ambulances were called to the ground in separate incidents.

Midfielders Manny Karas from Bentleigh and Nikola Gazic from St Albans were both taken to hospital after injuring themselves in head clashes as they went for the ball.

South Melbourne 1
Essendon Royals 1

South Melbourne missed an opportunity to go top of the table when they were held to a 1-1 draw by Essendon at the Bob Jane Stadium on Sunday evening.

Just as they had done in their previous home game against Green Gully, South played some open attacking football but squandered several chances.

Vaughan Coveny opened the scoring for South Melbourne. Almost immediately Essendon had equalised, after Michael Curcija fell in the box and then converted the resulting penalty.

In the second half, Coveny and his new strike partner Robbie Cattanach spurned golden opportunities to break the deadlock.

It was South Melbourne's seventh draw of the season.

Frankston Pines 1
Preston Lions 0

Preston suffered their second consecutive defeat when they were beaten by a lone Frankston goal on Saturday afternoon.

It was a battle of contrasting styles of play: Preston's speed and technique versus Frankston's physical game, and on this occasion the rough-and-tumble tactics triumphed.

Preston's chances weren't helped when they had to play the last 30 minutes with ten men.

Midfielder Ray Sekulovski was given his marching orders when his back-chatting earned him a second yellow card in the 59th minute.

However Preston looked as if they might even spring a heroic victory, forcing Pines keeper Brad Zealley into making a string of saves.

But some bad defending on the break allowed Frankston stiker Mirza Pedic to score with just a couple of minutes remaining.

Round 25 VPL Fixtures

Saturday August 13th
Sunshine Georgies vs Altona Magic
Sunday August 14th
St Albans vs Melbourne Knights
Preston Lions vs Bulleen Zebras
Bentleigh Greens vs Heidelberg United
Green Gully Cavs vs Oakleigh Cannons
Monday August 15th
Essendon Royals vs Frankston Pines
Fawkner-Whittlesea vs South Melbourne

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BRISBANE PremierLeague

Easts steer clear of drop

By Glenn Davis

The battle for relegation in the Brisbane premier league intensified last weekend when last placed Easts scored an upset 2-1 win over Taringa Rovers at Heath Park.

Easts win saw them leapfrog two places over the top of Brisbane City and Toowoomba in one of three catch up games played over the weekend.

Easts haven't escaped relegation but importantly moved to 14 points, two points clear of level pegging Brisbane City and Toowoomba with only four rounds remaining.

Easts trailed 1-nil at the break, but the Tigers do-or-die attitude prevailed in the second half with two goals for an upset win.

Substitute Jeff Dynes was the hero for the home side which gave their supporters real hope of avoiding relegation.

The lacklustre Taringa side made it hard for themselves from the opening whistle with what coach Alan Waller described as "a slack performance" from his men.

The scrappy first half offered few clear cut chances for either side and both teams went into the half time break scoreless.

The Tigers made some second half changes and it paid of with substitute Dynes scoring after just 10 minutes of being on the park.

He broke through the Rovers defence and delicately placed his chip over Gerard Kelly in the Taringa goals to give his side a 1-nil lead.

With eight minutes remaining however, the Tigers were stunned when Daniel Dreger got hold of his effort from the penalty area to level the score at 1-1 and the match looked to be heading for a stalemate.

But it was Dynes who took the match into his own hands and moments later scored his second of the night, after some good lead up work from striker Paul Brownlie.

Dynes placed his effort perfectly past Kelly into the net and it could prove vital in his side's survival in the Premier League this season..

The Taringa side had a few late chances and plenty of possession but to the Tigers credit they dug deep and fought off the Rovers' late challenge.

Easts coach Graham Binney was delighted with his side's hard-fought win and expects much the same from his side over the remaining four matches.

"I hope the boys can carry it on now until the end of the season," Binney said.

"We never meant to go out there and be nice as we were desperate for the points and we got them.

"The lads showed great spirit as they did in previous weeks against the Strikers and Mitchelton.

"We can't rely on anyone else to win or lose, we need to get results now until the end of the season," Binney said.

It was a night Taringa coach Alan Waller will be quick to put behind him.

"They were very physical and knocked us around a bit, my young side weren't experienced enough to handle it," Waller said.

"We're not out of finals yet. If we can get a few of the boys back on the park it will be a big boost for us.

"We have been having difficulty finishing goals over the last few weeks with Alex Davani and Reza Aysen both out again this week.

"We really didn't play well at all. Easts kept pumping the ball forward all night and they were desperate for the win."

The Taringa boss found it hard to award his man of the match but praised the efforts of defender Matt Edwards, playing his first full game in the firsts team, as well as a hard working Josh Evans who fought till the death.

"I feel a game like tonight's isn't going to draw crowds down to watch Brisbane Premier League," Waller said.

Rochedale Rovers and Palm Beach both earned a point in a torrid nil-all draw on Saturday night which was enough to take both sides to the top of the table in a four way tie with Palm Beach and Brisbane Strikers.

Despite having the two best attacking records in the competition, it was the goalkeepers from both sides who were the heroes.

The match lived up to all the pre-game expectations with neither side prepared to give anything.

Rochedale started with Ian Hutchison and Alex Panic up front but missing Matt Mundy and Tony Pearcey in defence while Palm Beach started the competition's leading goalscorer Russell Miner despite an injury concern but were still missing Neil Monro in midfield.

The game was played at great pace and with a ferocious intensity that occasionally threatened to boilover but certainly kept the crowd entertained.

Both sides kept attacking and towards the end of the first half Palm Beach were forced to substitute Miner with Ryan Tippett.

Rochedale's Panic missed a half chance when Swift spilt a drive from Darren Gray and another Thomas drive was blocked by Matt Smith.

However, Palm Beach started to threaten towards the end of the half and Tippett had a header go just wide with Aparico beaten.

Both sides went into the half time break still confident of getting the result they wanted and knowing that they would need to maintain the same effort in the second half.

The second half saw Palm Beach with the slight ascendancy but unable to score.

Dai Konomoto also was denied by another save as was Tippett as Palm Beach attacked-relentlessly.

However, Thomas nearly sent the one eyed Rochedale faithful delirious when he skimmed his free kick off the cross bar with only ten minutes to go and then had a well hit volley well saved by Swift.

The final action of the night was typical of the match with a Panic bicycle kick being tipped over the bar by an acrobatic Swift, leaving the two rivals unable to be separated and a single point each.

Rochedale coach Kieran Cooper praised the performance of Garreth Dorey and Mario Aparcio.

"It was probably Dorey's best game for us this year and Mario was brilliant," Cooper said.

"We probably had the best of the chances in the first half and maybe could have been two up at half time."

Palm Beach coach Karl Herdle said he was not surprised with the closeness of the game.

"The crowd would have been well entertained tonight. Both sides were tough and determined and overall cancelled each other out," he said.

"Both keepers were outstanding and deserved all the credit they got. We always have good games against Rochedale and tonight was no exception.

" They had the best of the first half and we came back at them and put them under pressure.

"The boys were a bit down after the game but we are back on top and everything is back in our own control again," he said.

In the final match Mitchelton beat University 2-1.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Eastern Suburbs 2
(Dynes 2)
Taringa Rovers 1
Half-time 0-0

Rochedale Rovers 0

Palm Beach 0

Half-time 0-0

Uni Of Qld 1
(Hughes)
Mitchelton 2
(Iwai, Pase) **Half-time 0-1**

Points: Palm Beach 37, Rochedale 37, Pine Rivers 37, Strikers 37, Souths 35, Taringa 32, Mitchelton 22, Brisbane Wolves 20, Uni of Qld 15, Easts 14, Brisbane City 12, Toowoomba 12

For more news on the QLD Premer League
click on to
www.
brisbanemenssoccer.com.au
for all the latest results-fixtures and standings

BILL TURNER CUP and BILL TURNER TROPHY Results

Bill Turner Cup

Round 4: Aquinas College 2 Kingsgrove 0, Daramalan College 1 Canberra 0, Carroll College 2 Radford College 1.

Round 5: Aquinas College 1 Menai 0, Hunter Sports 2 St Pauls Port Macquarie 0, Carroll College 1 Daramalan College 0, Galen Catholic Wangaratta 1-4 Griffith 1-2.

Bill Turner Girls Trophy

Round 4: Springwood 5 Cranebrook 1, Cootamundra 4 Galen Catholic Wangaratta 0, Narooma 3 Monaro 0, St Francis Xavier 1 Alfred Deakin 0.

Round 5: Endeavour Sports 2 Woolooware 1, Westfields Sports 7 Elderslie 0, Cootamundra 1 Wade 0.

Queensland Final Series
Bill Turner Cup

Semi Finals: Kirwan 4 Mackay North 0, John Paul College 5 St Josephs Nudgee 3.

Final: John Paul College 1 Kirwan 0.

Bill Turner Girls Trophy

Semi Finals: Tannum Sands 2 Cairns 0, Cavendish Road 0-4 Brigidine College 0-2.

Final: Cavendish Road 2 Tannum Sands 0.

WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

Warilla's Huge Upset

The age-old saying in football that sacking the incumbent club coach does the trick and revives the team spirit and brings success immediately seems to have come true for the recent surprise win of Warilla Wanderers against some of the South Coast's best.

Warilla changed the coach after poor start to the season and were languishing at the tail end of the competition and starring at relegation.

New man in charge Richard Vidal took over last week and suddenly things went positive.

His team is now on 21 points, well clear of the last two sides with six matches to go.

The club supporters all of a sudden are on a high, showing what a win can do, and are hoping of more good results to follow.

King Mickey Park, the home ground of Warilla is vibrating with renewed enthusiasm, will this trend continue?

Srebre Delovski recognised

Srebre Delovski, a Shellharbour Junior Soccer product, was recently voted Referee of the Year in the NSW Premier League at a Soccer NSW Gala Award Night.

He is a leading referee in the local City Coast Premier League and is the first Illawarra whistleblower to be honoured as NSW State top pick referee.

Last year in August, Srebre Delovski was selected to represent NSW with 5 others in an exchange programme with the Italian Federation.

He visited Italy on a 10- day tour and gained invaluable experience to further his career.

Two weekends ago, the local lad was in action at Gosford's Central Coast Stadium refereeing the A-League pre-season match between Central Coast Mariners and the Queensland Roar.

Srebre has certainly come a long way from his Barrack Heights High School years since picking up the whistle as a junior referee. Last year he was appointed to referee the Illawarra Premier League Grand Final at WIN Stadium in October 2004 (his second actually) in front of over 5000 spectators.

Shellharbour born Srebre Delovski (right) won the NSW Premier League's referee of the year

His young family, wife Silvana and baby boy Damien, might have to do without him being home on many more Saturdays or Sundays to come.

Srebre (30) has many more seasons of active referee duties left providing work or family commitments allow him to continue.

Reminder All – use the internet www.ifsunited.com site to have your say in Illawarra Football development. For IFA business go to www.footballillawarra.asn.au. Everybody has an opinion, players, fans, supporters, Mums & Dads, young & old – have an input

Weekend Results R21
Premier League

Port Kembla v Balgownie Rangers 4:0, Cringila Lions v Kemblawarra 2:2, Dapto v Coniston Lions 1:5, Picton Rangers v Bulli 5:1, Dandaloo v Albion Park White Eagles 1:3, South Coast United v Tarrawanna 2:4, Warilla Wanderers v Wollongong Olympic 1:1

IFA Football Draw Round 22 – 6th August – Tarrawanna v Port Kembla, Balgownie Rangers v Cringila Lions, Kemblawarra v Dapto, Bulli v Albion Park White Eagles, Wollongong Olympic v South Coast United, Warilla Wanderers v Dandaloo, Coniston Lions v Picton Rangers.

First Division Draw – Highlands United v Helensburgh, Berkeley v University, Shellharbour City v Shellharbour Workers, Bellambi v Ruse, Fernhill v Corrimal Rangers, Kiama v Woonona, Wollongong United v West Illawarra.

dressing sheds

by Mark Stavroulakis

A-League crowd attendances

Just under 23,000 fans turned up to see four A-League pre-season cup matches over the weekend sparking yet again a bit of concern on whether averages will grow when the season commences in late August.

Full marks this week went to the Central Coast Mariners who had 8362 fans turn up where they took on Sydney FC.

The Mariners have surely built a strong reputation as being an untapped region for football lovers but this indication has shown that they can mix it with the best.

Cross-town rivals the Newcastle Jets would be sounding the alarm bells in the midst of the Mariners success after their first round crowd disappointment.

Heading to New Zealand, just under 4000 went to see the Roar annihilate the Kiwis, Adelaide managed a healthy six and half thousand against the Jets while the Victory managed just under 5000 for their first match at Olympic Park.

Bearing in mind, these statistics will hopefully change as the season commences in August but look to see a rise just after September when both the AFL and NRL finish up their leagues.

Here's hoping

Frankie to be a flying Eagle?

Could this be true? Former Socceroo coach Frank Farina could be the man many NSW fans will see at the coaching dug-outs at Melita Stadium with the Parramatta Eagles?

That is the strong word currently going around on the Farina front who has also received media opportunities in promoting this season's A-League.

Who said defenders can't score

Defenders in Australia take note from Adelaide United's Michael Valkanis that even though you may spend most of the time stuck in the back-line, hoofing balls across the park or merely kicking the crap out of some poor attacker, beware that you can score goals.

Valkanis is Adelaide United's top scorer in the pre-season cup having scored a goal in both matches, a sign John Kosmina could convert the tall marker into a full fledging attacker.

Pre-season cup Live Updates?

Just a quick word to the FFA and their website, ABSW was inundated with a number of calls last week asking whether live updates would appear on the FFA's official website of all the pre-season cup matches.

Like the recent World Club Qualifiers, the FFA were given the seal of approval on a job well done updating A-League fans from here and abroad on all the matches that were running – this however has not been the case during this pre-season cup.

Full marks went to the Victory camp this week after posting a live-updates on their official website.

Will we see any updates on the FFA web this week? Stay tuned!

Time up for Muscat?

Strong rumours have suggested that Socceroos coach Guus Hiddink is about to spring full-time on Kevin Muscat's Australian career.

With a Dutch based camp set for August, it could be the first time the former Millwall hard-man will miss one since his debut as a young rugged defender.

Quite a shame really as Kevin's presence on and off the pitch is referred to as 'gold' by his fellow Socceroo peers.

It's believed that Newcastle Jets youngster Jade North could be the man replacing the player known to many as the AXE Socceroo defender

GUUS' CONCENTRATION CAMP

Socceroo coach Guus Hiddink will take charge of his first ever training camp on the 14th August in his native country of the Netherlands in selecting his squad for the up and coming Oceania qualifiers.

Set for a four-day camp, Hiddink will base the Roos in Hoenderloo, known for being a quiet town just outside of Amsterdam.

Players have been warned that no alcohol will be consumed and early nights will be on the menu as Hiddink's plan to discipline the team take full effect.

Sydney FC striker Saso Petrovski will be one of the new stars to gain a call-up after notching up a handful of goals and pulling together some great performances for his club.

Following Saso will be Swiss based attacker Joel Griffiths, who too, has been in great form with Neuchatel Xamax.

Experienced defenders Kevin Muscat and Tony Vidmar look set to miss out as will Perth Glory's Simon Colosimo.

SASO TO GET SPOT

Kiwis need results

Score – New Zealand Knights 0 were defeated by the Queensland Roar 5.

Already the New Zealand Knights have been labeled possible whipping boys of the A-League after being trounced by the lads from the Sunshine Coast last Saturday evening in their OWN den.

The biggest score of the season so far, this no doubt will be a worrying sign for coach John Adshead and his troops as they prepare for their debut year in the A-League.

Although a pre-season cup match, Adshead did rest a number of key players in Naoki Imaya, Josh Maguire, Darren Beazley, Zenon Caravella and Simon Yeo.

Experimenting with the squad, the Englishman has stated that all things will come good and he has warned the rest of the clubs that they will be ready come August 28.

"It is vital that we explore all our options and in doing so understand the capabilities of our players," he said. "While the supporters can expect a totally committed and competitive performance on Saturday, my focus is on August 28th when we begin our A-League campaign."

"Everything we do through these pre-season matches has an eye on the big picture. With that in mind Tommy (Assistant Manager Tommy Mason) and I are looking at a few changes after a performance in Sydney that while satisfying in some areas, left plenty of room for improvement."

Having an unfortunate tag of finishing in the bottom half of the ladder in previous experiences in the National League, New Zealand's representative side need to be very competitive if they have any chance of staying on in the 8-team A-League competition – for failure could spell the end of the road for the Kiwis and the start of a new one for another Australia club?

The Knights do have the capabilities of becoming a good squad with a handful of ex-English stars on hand in helping the team's cause.

Adshead and co surely have a job on their hands though, in proving to the rest of Australia, why they were worthy of being involved yet again in the Australian league.

NZ Knights keeper Danny Milosevic (left) does not want a repeat of the five goals he and his team copped from the Roar last weekend

Victory on the Prowl

Punters be very weary of A-League side Melbourne Victory when they tackle the rest of the pack in August.

Make no mistake, Ernie Merrick has primed and pumped his chargers for what will be a season the Victorians hope will prove fruitful.

The Scotsman stated that it will be tough to expect immediate results at the Victory however positive signs via their pre-season campaign have shown that they will be up there with the leaders of the pack.

Attack is the key to what could be Melbourne's success and who could blame this tactic when you have one of the hottest strikers in the country – namely Socceroo Archie Thompson.

Spotted by former Socceroo coach Frank Arok during his early footballing days at Bathurst 75, Archie has steam-rolled the heights of Europe where he has gained valuable experience in the Belgian league.

Two goals from two matches has already sent out a message to rival A-League strikers that he means business.

Its also been met by new Roos coach Guus Hiddink who is almost certain to include him in the up and coming training camp in Holland.

Accompanying Archie are a mass of other quality attackers in Andy Vlahos and Daniel Allsopp.

All with European experience, this attacking trio will no doubt be a menacing thorn for any opposing A-League side.

One of the club's main stars in midfield, Michael Ferrante boldly stated that Melbourne will be the team to fear this year.

"With performances like the match against the Glory and the way we played in the second half against the Jets, I'm sure we'll win the league", he stated to the press.

But with their attack comes the comforting issue that they are also well equipped in defence.

Skipper Kevin Muscat and internationals Richard Kitzbichler and Geoffrey Clayes have certainly pulled a tight knit bond together that will see them being a very tough unit to crack.

You can also throw in the names of promising stars such as Kristian Sarkies, Vince Lia and Carl Rechhia and you could have a side worthy of competing with Australia's best.

With the leadership skills of hunter like defender Muscat, why wouldn't you go past seeing this team as being the one to watch out for in 2005?

Melbourne Victory's pin-up striker Archie Thompson on the attack

Zelic a Roo chance - Okon unlikely

At this stage it looks like a fifty-fifty chance Ned Zelic will link up with the rest of the Socceroo squad in the Netherlands later this month.

Australian assistant coach Graham Arnold has been in contact with Zelic about his selection into the squad but it has not been confirmed as to whether he would take the trek to catch Guus Hiddink's first training camp.

A player many people believe should be in the squad, Zelic has been the Jets' most consistent player during the pre-season cup.

Finally, it is highly unlikely that former Roos captain Paul Okon will make the cut in Holland.

His agent Leo Karis did state to SBS that at this stage, no contact has been made about the selection of Paul to Holland.

Deane to the rescue

Perth Glory coach Steve McMahon is confident star signing Brian Deane will be available for their final Preseason Cup clash against Newcastle Jets this week.

Former Sunderland and Leeds United forward Deane was badly missed on Friday night as Glory wasted a hatful of chances in Melbourne before losing 1-0.

That result has left McMahon needing victory for any chance of his team reaching the semifinals. Glory are hopeful Deane will be available for the Jets clash.

"It is more likely than not that he will be here," McMahon said

Pre-Season Cup Previews

Perth Glory vs Newcastle Jets

Perth were dealt with a damaging blow by an in-form Melbourne Victory last week but this week could herald the Western Australian side's first win of the year.

Always strong at the Members Equity Stadium, the Glory will prove to be too strong for the Jets who again found it hard to score against Adelaide last week.

No Ante Milicic spells goal scoring troubles for the Jets

Melbourne Victory vs Adelaide United

An intriguing battle between two very competitive sides, this game looks towards swinging the Victorian side's way after an impressive display of football against the Glory last week.

Again, if the attacking trio of Thompson, Vlahos and Allsopp fire, Adelaide will be in for a long night.

NZ Knights vs Central Coast Mariners

After an embarrassing five-nil loss at home to the Roar, the Knights will need to regroup and be at their very best against a well oiled machine in the Mariners.

Knights boss John Adshead did have six plus injuries in last weekend's clash and half of them are expected to play this week.

The Mariners held their heads high in their loss to Sydney FC last week but their fast flowing football will prove too much for the Kiwis.

QLD Roar vs Sydney FC

Roar coach Miron Blieberg has issued that he wants to beat Sydney FC badly this weekend in Cairns.

Queensland were riding high after a five-nil smashing of the Knights however will be up against a different beast in Sydney FC.

Two-goal hero Royce Brownlie suffered a fractured rib last week and will not take part in the game, something of a concern for the home team.

For Sydney, a 17-game winning streak seems to go from strength to strength, and with the exception of Mark Milligan (hernia operation 8 weeks) and possibly David Zdrilic, the team should be at full strength to rack up what could be their 18th straight win.

A-LEAGUE

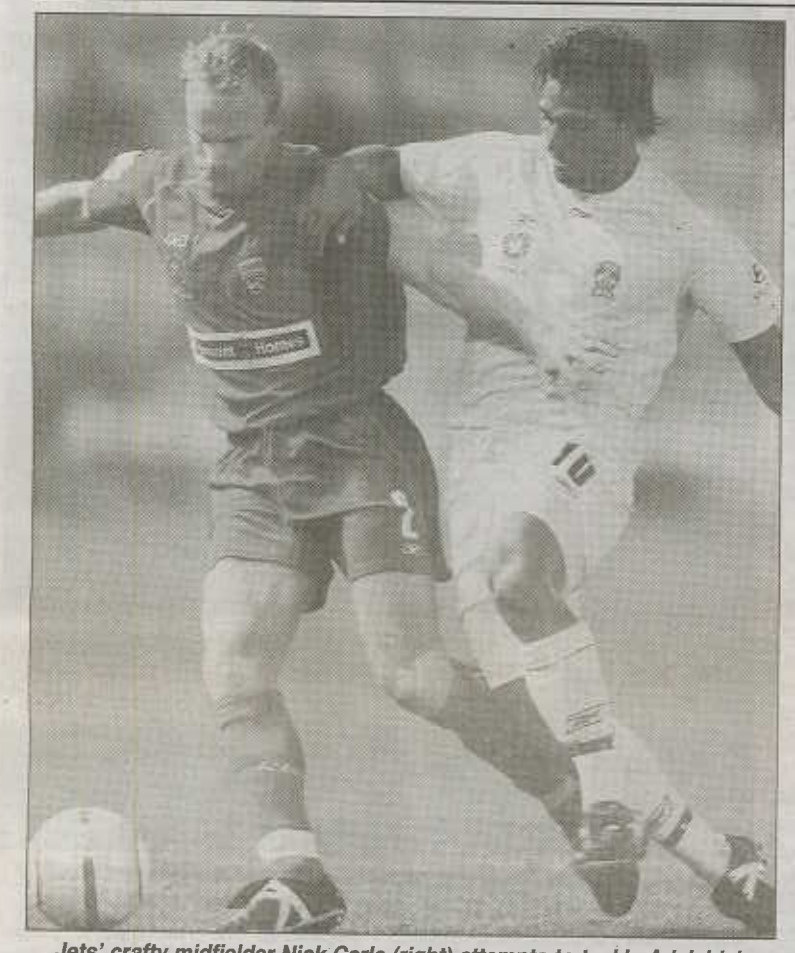
A-League Pre-Season Tournament

GROUP A

ALL SQUARE IN ADELAIDE

Johnson rescues Jets

Adelaide United	1
Newcastle Jets	1



Jets' crafty midfielder Nick Carle (right) attempts to tackle Adelaide's experienced defender Richie Alagic

By Andrew Howe

A tight Group A pre-season cup match at Hindmarsh Stadium on Friday night saw honours shared yet again, with Adelaide United and Newcastle United drawing 1-1 on the scoreboard - and 1-1 in the disallowed goals category.

An uneventful first half in front of a healthy crowd of almost 7000 spectators ended goalless, with the most exciting incident coming very early in proceedings when Adelaide had its goal disallowed.

The 4th minute passage of play started with Angelo Costanzo laying the ball off to former Socceroo Carl Veart, whose shot from 30 metres was parried by the goalkeeper into Ross Aloisi; the Adelaide midfielder managed to find the net with a well placed first-time shot, but was ruled off-side by an observant assistant referee.

The first half then grinded down to a dull affair, with neither team prepared to take any chances.

A positive which came out of the Jets corner was the sterling performance by former Socceroo Ned Zelic.

His precise passing was what put him on the map as being one of his side's best performers on the night.

It was a different story in the second half however, which started with a rash challenge by Newcastle's loan player Allan Picken on Aurelio Vidmar.

Things got a bit nasty with both sides after that challenge but once the resulting melee died down, Picken was shown the only yellow card of the game.

In the 62nd minute it was Newcastle's turn to have a goal ruled out.

The exciting Nick Carle had made a useful run in towards goal, passed on to Labinot Haliti who then found team-mate Matthew Thompson, whose strike into goal was judged to have been scored from an off-side position by referee Simon Przydacz.

With both sides having shifted several gears up, Adelaide scored the first legitimate goal in the 74th minute.

A corner from second half substituteand Chinese international Shengqing Qu lobbed in to the middle of a very congested goalmouth, and it was a lucky Michael Valkanis who claimed the goal when the ball appeared to bounce off his torso and over the line.

It was Valkanis' second goal in as many weeks after scoring against the Glory in the side's first pre-season cup outing.

Newcastle struck back almost immediately, raiding the Adelaide goal area three times before eventually managing to convert.

Nick Carle released a nice backheel to Guy Bates, who ran sideways and laid off a short pass to the rampaging Richard Johnson, who rammed the ball home from 18 metres directly in front of goal.

There was little Adelaide goalkeeper Daniel Beltrame could do to stop the 79th minute goal as the ball shot in a few centimetres inside the left goalpost.

The home side almost stole the match in the final minutes, firstly when Chad Bugeja almost got to an near-perfect diagonal cross from Richie Alagich, and then in the 88th minute when the same two players combined; a fine save from the outstretched hands of Newcastle custodian Liam Reddy denying Bugeja a headed opportunity from just four metres out.

Best players for Adelaide were Alagich and a hard working Veart, while Thompson, Craig Deans and Haliti were the pick of the bunch for the away side.

You beauty – Adelaide United's new goalscoring sensation, defender Michael Valkanis scored his second goal in two weeks

Newcastle Jets striker Franco Parisi (left) shown marshaled out by Adelaide's Angelo Costanzo

GAME STATS

ADELAIDE UNITED 1
(Michael Valkanis 74')
Crowd: 6,854 Referee: Simon Przydacz

NEWCASTLE JETS 1
(Richard Johnson 79')
Dommele

Adelaide United: Daniel Beltrame (gk); Richie Alagich, Kristian Rees, Angelo Costanzo, Michael Valkanis, Ross Aloisi, Carl Veart, Matthew Kemp (Aaron Goulding 85'), Aurelio Vidmar (Shengqing Qu 61'), Travis Dodd (Chad Bugeja 72'), Adam van

Newcastle Jets: Liam Reddy (gk); Steve Eagleton, Jade North, Craig Deans, Ned Zelic, Richard Johnson, Matthew Thompson, Nick Carle, Labinot Haliti, Franco Parisi (Guy Bates 68'), Allan Picken
Cautions: Picken 50'

A-League Pre-Season Tournament

GROUP A

MELBOURNE VICTORIOUS

Melbourne Victory	1
Perth Glory	0

By Alan Clark

Melbourne Victory got off to an excellent home start with a first-up win against Perth Glory in the pre-season cup.

Archie Thompson scored just on the hour in an entertaining game which should assist Victory's quest for the Melbourne football fans' allegiance.

Archie Thompson scored just on the hour, lobbing Glory goalkeeper Jason Petkovic from the point of the penalty-area.

"It was a scrappy win," said Victory coach Ernie Merrick after the game.

"We had some very good passages of play, but I wouldn't get carried away with it. (We're) just not playing consistently yet."

Merrick had brought on Andy Vlahos for Steve Pantelidis at the break to give the team more drive, and this was an astute change.

"I thought Steve did a good job, but I wanted a more creative midfielder."

Glory coach Steve McMahon was not overly-concerned at the result. "I'm quite pleased with progress," he said. "We've still got a number of weeks before the main season starts, (but) our main goal is to (prepare) for 26 August."

"We forced the issue once we went a goal behind. We had chances."

Melbourne Victory skipper Kevin Muscat displays his trademark kung fu kick style on Perth Glory's Naum Sekulovski (right)

GAME STATS

MELBOURNE VICTORY 1
(Archie Thompson 60')
PERTH GLORY 0

Crowd: 4,528. Referee: Peter Green

MELBOURNE VICTORY: Michael Theoklitos (gk), Kevin Muscat ©, Mark Byrnes, Geoffrey Claeys Richard Kitzbichler (Ricky Diaco 89'), Michael Ferrante, Steve Pantelidis, (Andy Vlahos 46'), Kristian Sarkies, Carl Recchia (Adrian Leijer 86'), Daniel Allsopp, Archie Thompson

Substitute not used: Eugene Galekovic
Yellow cards: R Kitzbichler (MV) 72', C Recchia (MV)80', B Despotovski (PG) 58'.

PERTH GLORY: Jason Petkovic (gk), Jamie Coyne, Ante Kovacevic, Jamie Harnwell (c), (Matt Horsley 82'), Scott Miller, Adrian Caceres, Nick Ward, (Henry Fa'Aarodo 67), Simon Colosimo, Billy Celeski, Naum Sekulovski, (Hiroyuki Ishida 63) Bobby Despotovski
Substitute not used: Milan Jovanic

This was the first game at national level in Melbourne since the NSL elimination final between South Melbourne and Marconi Stallions played 503 days previously on Sunday 14 March 2004.

A decent sized crowd of just under five thousand attended for what was basically a pre-season warm-up game. They saw an enthralling if not expansive opening, but as the match progressed and Victory seemed to gain the upper hand, they decided to get involved in the action and actively support their new team.

Much of Victory's drive came from young Kristian Sarkies in the engine-room of midfield, playing with a level of composure well beyond his eighteen years, and was the game's stand-out player.

"I thought he was outstanding," said Merrick.

Naum Sekulovski had the first shot of the game for Glory with just three minutes gone, but Victory's first reply of note took until just before the quarter-hour when Austrian Richard Kitzbichler let fly after a meandering run which started well inside his own half.

Daniel Allsopp was later set free up the right from a Michael Ferrante pass, but his cross flashed across the face of goal without a Victory player near enough to get a touch.

Glory had claims for a penalty turned down just before the half-hour by referee Peter Green when Bobby Despotovski's free-kick crashed off a rising wall. Ferrante had committed the foul on the edge of the penalty-area to set up the free-kick in a dangerous position.

"To be fair, it was only one hand," said McMahon to laughter. "We didn't even get a corner from it. I'm baffled."

Just after the half-hour, Sarkies went on a storming run up the inside-left channel and then released Thompson wider to his right who had got behind Jamie Coyle. Thompson shot first time but over the bar.

The balance of play began to fall Victory's way, but - as the half drew to a close - Perth Glory should have made more of some good possession from a corner which eventually led to a ball being played in to Despotovski inside the penalty-area, but the Glory striker shot over the bar.

Despotovski had an even better chance ten minutes after the break. Adrian Cacares had been Glory's best avenue of attack and once again he was the architect of a dangerous move. His cross fell to Nick Ward who was able to squeeze the ball through to Despotovski as Muscat closed him down. Despotovski faced only goalkeeper Michael Theoklitos but scuffed his shot and the chance was gone.

Immediately the ball was played forward for Victory and Daniel Allsopp saw the assistant's flag raised saving him the embarrassment of putting the ball wide from one yard out as the ball crashed off the post from Thompson's shot back into his path.

But Thompson brought off the moment of magic the game called out for on the hour. Ferrante had set free Kitzbichler who in turn found Thompson free up the right. Petkovic saw the danger and decided to try to get to the ball first. Thompson was quicker. He lifted the ball high over Petkovic's despairing leap and watched as it bounced into the net.

Victory goalscorer Archie Thompson (left) is met by a Simon Colosimo tackle during last Saturday's evening match at Olympic Park

Every time Archie gets the ball he's electric," said Merrick. "In fact, I've never seen him pass the ball unless (he's surrounded). If there's five defenders, Archie would take them all on."

Within a minute, Glory could have levelled. Despotovski again found himself in a good position and ready to strike but was swiftly closed down with a crunching tackle by Mark Byrnes which snuffed out the opportunity.

Victory could have extended the lead in a frantic close. Geoffrey Claeys saw a shot headed off the line from a corner, Kitzbichler brought out a fine save from Petkovic, and Thompson and Allsopp managed to waste an opportunity with Glory stretched.

Henry Fa'Arodo was introduced late to the fray and almost turned the game for Glory. He had home hearts racing when he found himself in a similar position as Thompson did for Victory's goal as he chased down a ball which Theoklitos raced out to collect. Fa'Arodo got in first and lofted the ball, but it fell agonisingly wide of the near post.

Fa'Arodo had another opportunity right at the death when he beat Victory's offside trap on a Despotovski pass, but Theoklitos was able to get in a fine block for the save which confirmed it would be Victory's night.

Glory's Scott Miller lets loose with a tackle on Melbourne's Richard Kitzbichler (left)

SOCCER NSW LIFTOUT

GALA DAY A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

On Sunday, July 31, some of Sydney's finest young footballing talent proved the future is in good hands when 32 teams took part in the Soccer NSW-Sydney FC Gala Day at Valentine Park.

A crowd in excess of 1000 people flocked to sample the action, as well as the special guest appearance of A-League glamour team, Sydney FC.

The day which was open to Under 10 and Under 11 teams, attracted entrants from around the greater Sydney region, including squads from Castle Hill, Wentworth Falls, Canterbury, Eastern Suburbs, Campbelltown, Richmond, Cronulla, Como and Hunters Hill.

After seven gruelling matches, AC United defeated Lilli Pilli 3-1 in the final of the Under 10s competition, while Smithfield RSL accounted for Sydney Juniors by the same scoreline in the Under 11s.

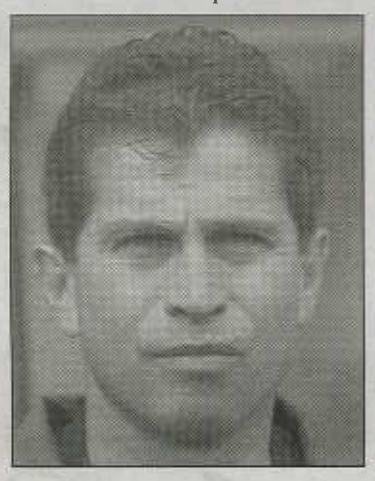
But the fun and excitement wasn't limited to proceedings on the pitch with former Manchester United striker Dwight Yorke and his Sydney FC team-mates dropping in to sign autographs and pose for photographs with an adoring crowd.

The Gala Day at the official training home of Sydney FC was attended by the CEO of Soccer NSW, Michael Quarmby, and Sydney FC Chairman, Walter Bugno.

The next major youth competition hosted at Valentine Park will be the glamorous Champion of Champions tournament in October.

PARRAMATTA CHASE FARINA

With a new-found aggression, NSW football club Parramatta Eagles are leading the chase to sign former Socceroo coach Frank Farina as part of the club's assault on the 2006 competition.



Frank Farina

Farina met with Eagle's representatives this week, to discuss his future with the strong well-established western Sydney club.

"It's only early days" said Eagles' boss Tony Azzopardi, "Frank can see that we are heading back to the top, and will consider our offer when we table it in the next few days".

Farina, an advocate for professional junior development, was also impressed by the club's academy and its link with world giants Manchester United.

"Raul Blanco and the academy staff are working wonders here" said Azzopardi. "Our club has brought dozens of home-grown players through to grade football over the years, and this is an important asset to any first grade coach."

"Frank is a consummate professional. He's been there, done that, at all levels in European football, international football, and was also successful as a coach in the old NSL. He knows what we are doing and where we are heading, and he is keen to talk further with Raul and our other technical staff." added Azzopardi. "There is obviously more discussion to take place, but at this stage things are moving along nicely".

STRIKER JAMES SET FOR SWITCH TO DEFENCE

Harry James

Debutant Dulwich Hill coach Scott Wells is set to reinvent one of the leagueís top strikers as a defender, just four weeks out from the Winter Super League final series. Engaged in a bitter struggle to cement a top-three spot, Wells is likely to shift former National League striker Harry James to stopper in a bid to get his side's season back on track.

"The club has a real injury crisis and if it means moving to stopper to contribute, then Iím more than happy to do it," said James. "I have played there a few times, so I know the position and having played up front all my life, I'll be awake to all the striker tricks."

With sweeper Mathew Percy heading overseas this week and injuries to key defenders Eddie Giraldo and Jose Mendes, the pickings look slim for Wells, who is also rumoured to be considering a playing comeback. Wells hasn't played since round three, but the former youth international has been training and could still make a contribution at sweeper. With matches against Hurstville ZSC, Fairfield Bulls, Hurstville City Minotaurs and Fraser Park, their run home is attractive and will give Wells enough time to bed down a watertight defence.

Their clash with second-placed Canterbury-Marrickville at Melita Stadium tomorrow (Wednesday) looks like a cracker, as the Berries seek to extend their winning streak to six. Just eight points behind F.C. Bossy Liverpool, a win will see the Berries close the gap to a respectable five points, and give Bossy coach Mile Todorovski something to think about.

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE

RUN TO THE FINALS

Of the remaining spots in the top five, form would suggest Fraser Park are likely to occupy one of them, though they will need to iron out a few defensive frailties if they are to nail down third. With Michael Kladis and Steve Karavatakis due to come back next week, their clash with the Berries could well decide the outcome of the top three.

Of all the sides chasing the top five, it is Hajduk Wanderers and the league leaders F.C.Bossy Liverpool that look the most shaky. Since installing Trevor Morgan as coach, Hajduk has won just one out of five and will need to arrest a poor away record if they are to stave off the late challenges of Sutherland and Sydney University. Hajduk play Northern Tigers, Hurstville ZSC, Stanmore Hawks and Bossy in the run home.

F.C. Bossy coach Mile Todorovski readily admits his side is in desperate need of a shake-up after two losses has seen their lead at the top of the table sliced to just eight points.

"We are definitely not playing well and not looking anything like the team we were, say six weeks ago," said Todorovski.

"Any side can beat any other team in this competition and we have just four weeks to solve our problems and qualify for the top five."

Of the rest, only Sydney University and Sutherland have any real chance of figuring in the post-season after the Rams and Tigers failed to win matches over the weekend. Sutherland are five points behind fifth spot and will need to lift significantly after dropping their last two games.

The Sharks face F.C.Bossy Liverpool and Canterbury-Marrickville in the next two weeks and will need to win both of those to have any hope. Sydney University, by contrast, play Fairfield Bulls and the Minotaurs, and could bridge the two point gap between sixth and fifth before meeting Fraser Park and Sutherland in their final two games.

Some of the 1000 plus crowd, which flocked to the successful Soccer NSW Sydney FC Gala Day at Valentine Park last Sunday

Sydney FC's star signing Dwight Yorke mingled with the big turnout of people at last Sunday's Soccer NSW-Sydney FC Gala Day at Valentine Park

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NSW WINTER SUPER LEAGUE

AT A GLANCE

FRASER PARK DRAGONS 2
FC BOSSY LIVERPOOL 1

Just four weeks out from the finals series, the pressure is starting to tell on FC Bossy Liverpool after suffering its second successive defeat in as many weeks. Fraser Park won their clash 2-1 against the Winter Super League top guns.

HURSTVILLE CITY 1
C/BURY MARRICKVILLE 4

Canterbury-Marrickville 'super-coach' Laki Konistis made it five wins from five starts as his Berries outfit knocked over the Minotaurs 4-1 at Rockdale Sports Centre.

The result was never in doubt, as the Berries proved to be too quick and too skilful in the key exchanges for their relegation threatened opponent. They set up a key showdown with third placed side Dulwich Hill this Wednesday night (tomorrow) at Melita Stadium (kick-off 8.15pm)

FAIRFIELD BULLS 2
WESTERN RAGE 2

Western Rage are making a habit of scoring goals late to rescue matches and they did it again this week, scoring twice in ten minutes to put the final nail in the Fairfield Bulls coffin for 2005.

Action from the Fairfield Bulls - Western Rage clash

Liverpool Bossy striker Nick Bosevski (left) is monitored closely by Fraser Park defender Mark Barlamis

Rage trailed 2-0, but Nenos Bobo and Ismael Arrarte scored to give their team a valuable point in the battle to avoid relegation. The Bulls are now all but mathematically assured of finishing with the infamous wooden spoon.

NORTHERN TIGERS 0
HURSTVILLE ZSC 1

The Northern Tigers won't be appearing in the 2005 Winter Super League final series after they conceded an 89th minute strike to Denis Alilovic to go down 1-0.

In the midst of a battle to avoid relegation, the three points are a real gift to Hurstville ZSC, who are locked in a gripping battle with five other sides to decide who will join the Fairfield Bulls in next season's First Division competition.

STANMORE HAWKS 2
SUTHERLAND SHARKS 0

Stanmore Hawks player/coach Scott Baillie turned back the clock to lift his side to a 2-0 win over Sutherland at Pratten Park. Baillie scored one goal, having earlier raced back to clear a Jimmy Bakis shot off the Hawks line.

Omar Obeid was also prominent, setting up both Baillie's goal and the one scored by Neil Philllipou. The loss left Sutherland in seventh spot, five points outside the top five.

DULWICH HILL 2
SYDNEY UNIVERSITY 2

Sydney University let slip a golden opportunity to make ground on the Super League top five when they conceded an 88th minute own goal to gift Dulwich Hill an unlikely 2-2 draw at Arlington Oval.

It was defender Cormack Begley, who unfortunately tipped a ball into his own net under relentless pressure from the fast finishing Dulwich Hill.

MACARTHUR RAMS 2
HAJDUK WANDERERS UTD ..2

Macarthur Rams can just about kiss goodbye to participating in the 2005 Final Series after staging a 2-2 draw with fifth placed Hajduk Wanderers United.

In a game which failed to reach any lofty heights, it was a superb second half strike from Andrew Borg which gave Macarthur a point, but it was not enough to see the Rams continue to press their claims for the post season.

ROUND 22: RESULTS

FIRST GRADE: Macarthur Rams 2 (P Wither 11', A Borg 78') **Hajduk Wanderers United 2** (S Chipps 18', penalty E Barkhousir 63'), **Stanmore Hawks 2** (S Baillie 60', N Philippou 84') **Sutherland Sharks 0, Fraser Park Dragons 2** (L Austin 78'/81') **FC Bossy Liverpool 1** (A Asanovic 89'), **Hurstville City Minotaurs 1** (M Ferreira 78') **Canterbury Marrickville 4** (D Collina 10', G Sama 20', F Umlil 75', J Tsironis 81'), **Dulwich Hill 2** (D Storey 51' Own Goal 88') **Sydney University 2** (B Wiblen 43', N Moulds 69'), **Northern Tigers 0 Hurstville ZSC 1** (D Alilovic 89'), **Fairfield Bulls 2** (M Dowling 63', T Basha 66') **Western Rage 2** (N Bobo 84', I Arrarte 94').

GRADE 20: Macarthur Rams 1 Hajduk Wanderers United 0, Stanmore Hawks 2 Sutherland Sharks 0, Fraser Park Dragons 2 FC Bossy Liverpool 3, Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Canterbury Marrickville 2, Dulwich Hill 0 Sydney University 0, Northern Tigers 1 Hurstville ZSC 0, Fairfield Bulls 0 Western Rage 1.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

18 Alex Asanovic (FCBL),

16 Ivo de Jesus (DH),

13 Fadi Ghosson (CMO),

10 Iain Macdonald (SS),

Tim Gledhill (HW)

SOCCER NSW

WSL FIRST GRADE ROUND 22

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
FC Bossy Liverpool	**22**	**14**	**5**	**3**	**42**	**23**	**19**	**47**
Canterbury Marrickville	21	12	3	6	46	36	10	39
Dulwich Hill	21	10	7	4	41	27	14	37
Fraser Park Dragons	22	11	4	7	40	31	9	37
Hajduk Wanderers United	22	10	6	6	37	31	6	36
Sydney University	22	10	4	8	33	32	1	34
Sutherland Sharks	22	10	1	11	31	27	4	31
Macarthur Rams	22	9	2	11	27	33	-6	29
Northern Tigers	21	7	5	9	27	28	-1	26
Stanmore Hawks	22	7	4	11	23	27	-4	25
Western Rage	22	6	7	9	36	48	-12	25
Hurstville City Minotaurs	22	6	6	10	28	34	-6	24
Hurstville ZSC	22	7	3	12	29	40	-11	24
Fairfield Bulls	21	3	3	15	20	43	-23	12

WSL GRADE 20 ROUND 22

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Sydney University	**22**	**14**	**5**	**3**	**48**	**18**	**30**	**47**
Dulwich Hill	21	12	7	2	49	20	29	43
Macarthur Rams	22	11	6	5	47	38	9	39
FC Bossy Liverpool	22	10	5	7	34	32	2	35
Canterbury Marrickville	21	11	1	9	48	33	15	34
Fraser Park Dragons	22	9	7	6	45	33	12	34
Sutherland Sharks	22	9	5	8	37	42	-5	32
Fairfield Bulls	22	9	2	11	34	46	-12	29
Hajduk Wanderers United	22	7	5	10	37	37	0	26
Stanmore Hawks	22	7	4	11	26	33	-7	25
Western Rage	21	6	6	9	27	32	-5	24
Northern Tigers	22	4	10	8	24	40	-16	22
Hurstville City Minotaurs	22	5	4	13	23	43	-20	19
Hurstville ZSC	21	3	3	15	19	51	-32	12

NSW WINTER SUPER LEAGUE FIXTURES

◆ ROUND 23 ◆

Saturday 6th August

Home Team	Away Team	Venue	First	Grade 20
Western Rage	Hurstville City Minotaurs	Garside Park	7:30pm	5:30pm
Stanmore Hawks	Macarthur Rams	Pratten Park	3:00pm	1:00pm

Sunday 7th August

Home Team	Away Team	Venue	First	Grade 20
Hajduk Wanderers United	Northern Tigers	Hajduk Stadium	3:00pm	1:00pm
FC Bossy Liverpool	Sutherland Sharks	Ernie Smith Res	3:00pm	1:00pm
Canterbury Marrickville	Fraser Park Dragons	Lambert Park	3:00pm	1:00pm
Sydney University	Fairfield Bulls	Hensley Ath. Field	3:00pm	1:00pm
Dulwich Hill	Hurstville ZSC	Arlington Oval	3:00pm	1:00pm

A-League Pre-Season Tournament

GROUP B

Sydney continues its unbeaten glamour run

Petrovski on song again!

Central Coast Mariners	0
Sydney FC	2

Sydney FC's unbeaten run has continued at Central Coast Stadium tonight, with an emphatic second half display that has almost ensured their place in the Pre-Season Cup semi finals.

Goals from Steve Corica and Sasho Petrovski secured a hard fought victory, over a gallant Central Coast Mariners side that will rue a missed penalty by last weeks hat-trick hero Nick Mrdja in the first half.

While the match itself was by no means a classic, it did once again show that the new Hyundai A-League will be a high-standard competition, with both teams giving the 8,000 strong crowd a good exhibition of football.

The game itself came down to Sydney making the most of its few chances in the second half.

Sydney captain Steve Corica finished exquisitely, when he pounced on a terrible mistake by his opposite Noel Spencer on the edge of the box, to shoot across Mariners keeper John Crawley and inside the far post.

The match was wrapped up with eleven minutes remaining and the goal was simply down to the sublime skill of Dwight Yorke. He brilliantly turned two defenders that left them high and dry and he then in instant played Iain Fyfe in behind the defence on the left. Fyfe then drilled a low cross to the near post and Petrovski was on hand to clip the ball home for yet another goal.

The win lifts Sydney onto six points, with Central Coast and Queensland Roar on three points, after the Roar thrashed the New Zealand Knights 5-0 in Auckland earlier in the evening. The Roar must beat Sydney next weekend in Cairns, while the Mariners must win away in Auckland to also have any chance of qualifying for the semi finals.

The opening half was a game of cat and mouse as both sides looked for openings with patient and incisive passing, but the defences of both sides was proving tough to crack.

Both teams did however go close to an opening goal, with the woodwork denying the Mariners Wayne O'Sullivan and Sydney's Sasho Petrovski, although it was Mrdja's poor penalty that proved to be the most costly miss.

His weakly hit penalty in the 38th minute, would have given the Mariners what would have been a deserved first half time lead, but he allowed Sydney keeper Clint Bolton to atone for his earlier error in bringing down Stewart Petrie, as he went round him.

The game could so easily have started in sensational fashion for the home side when O'Sullivan struck the woodwork in the fourth minute. Mrdja squared a great ball across the top of the penalty area for O'Sullivan, with Irishman's fiercely struck shot, crashing against the crossbar, with Bolton well beaten.

This lifted the Mariners confidence and they continually had Sydney on the back foot with some quick movement forward, although Sydney's defence was holding firm.

Up the other end, Yorke and Petrovski struggled for good service and their first clear chance at goal did not come till the 20th minute, with Petrovski's header easily held by John Crawley.

Five minutes later though, Petrovski almost had the opening goal when he was the beneficiary of deflected shot by David Carney. The ball fell nicely for him 10 yards out, he took a couple of touches, but his shot cannoned off the near post.

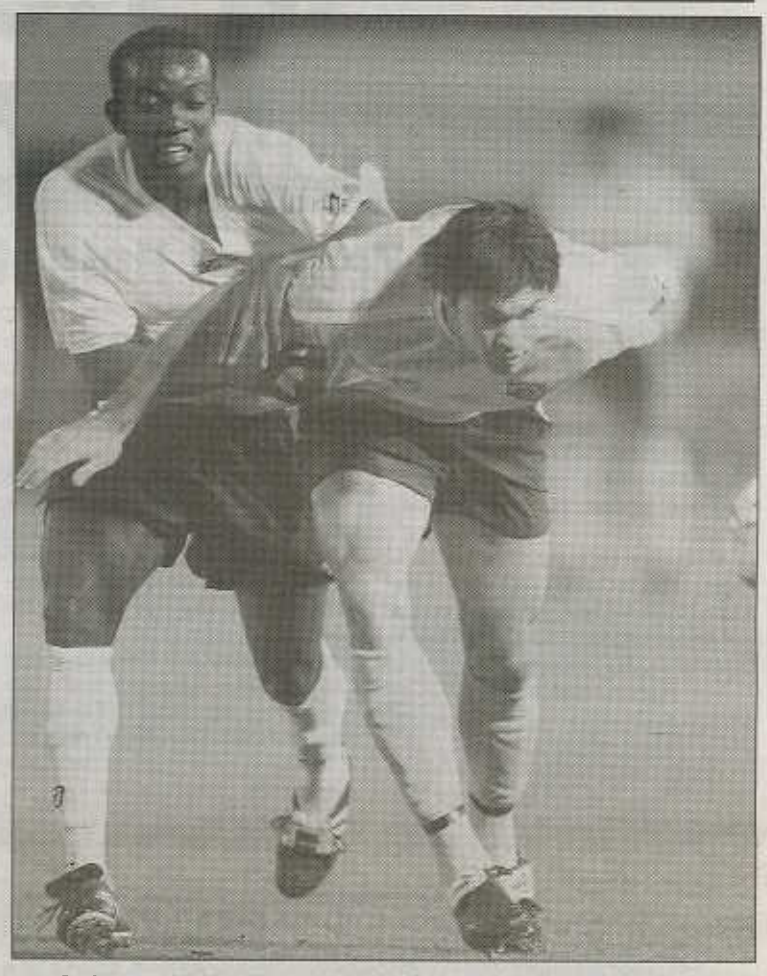
While the chances weren't coming thick and fast, when they did they were near misses and usually from terrific pieces of build-up play.

Pondeljak went close in the 36th minute with a header that just cleared the crossbar after great work by O'Sullivan down the right again.

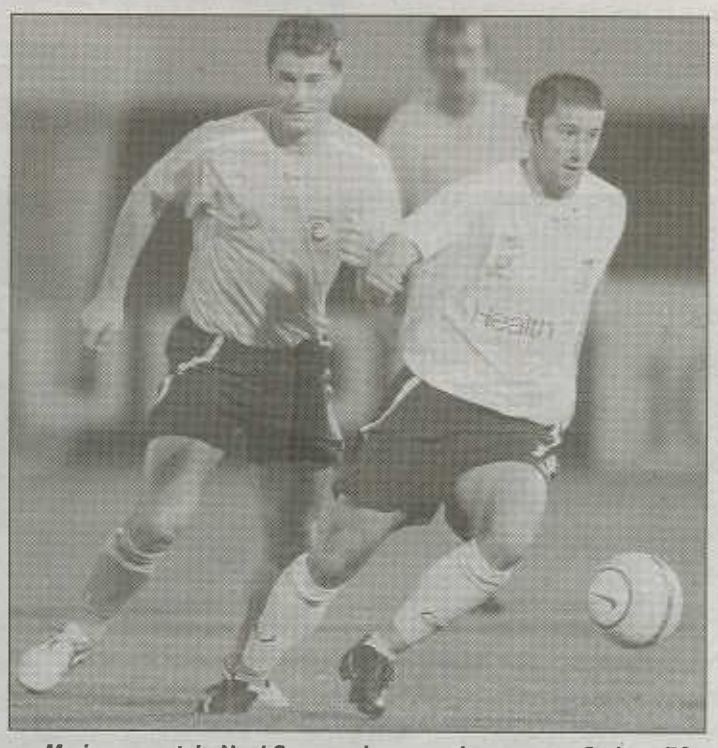
Five minutes later it was Sydney's turn, with Terry McFlynn and Yorke combining on the right. McFlynn's cutback from the by-line found Steve Corica, whose thumping volley brought out a terrific reaction save from John Crawley.

The second half was again tough, uncompromising football, with making the better of their opportunities when they arrived.

Mrdja twice went close in the dying stages, shooting wide when in a good position 12 yards out and striking the post once again with an audacious effort from wide out of the penalty area.



Sydney FC's marquee man Dwight Yorke gives chase on Mariners defender Michael Beauchamp (righ)



Mariners captain Noel Spencer keeps a close eye on Sydney FC midfielder Terry McFlynn (right)

Let the Sydney FC unbeaten run continue – players celebrate Steve Corica's goal

Game Stats

CENTRAL COAST 0
SYDNEY FC 2
(S Corica 57', S Petrovski 79')
Crowd: 8,262. Referee: Matthew Breeze

CENTRAL COAST: John Crawley (gk); Wayne O'Sullivan (Matthew Osman 82'), Noel Spencer (Andre Gumprecht 80'), Michael Beauchamp, John Hutchinson (Adam Kwasnik 78'), Dean Heffernan, Nick Mrdja, Tom Pondeljak, Stewart Petrie, Andrew Clark, Alex Wilkinson

Subs: Danny Vukovic (gk)

SYDNEY FC : Clint Bolton (gk); Iain Fyfe, Alvin Ceccoli, Ufuk Talay(Robbie Middleby 82'), Steve Corica, Sasho Petrovski, David Carney, Andrew Packer, Terry McFlynn, Jacob Timpano, Dwight Yorke

Substitute not used: Steve Laurie, Alejandro Salazar, Justin Pasfield (gk)

Yellow Cards: Petrovski (29'), Bolton (37'), Packer (65'), Hutchinson (66')

A-League Pre-Season Tournament

GROUP B

Roar send Knights packing in New Zealand

Brownlie rolls hapless Kiwis

New Zealand Knights	0
Queensland Roar	5

Queensland Roar are still alive in the Hyundai A-League Pre-Season Cup after a thumping 5-0 win in Auckland against the New Zealand Knights.

Miron Bleiberg's men bounced back strongly from last week's 3-1 reversal to the Central Coast Mariners, with a more assured and dominant performance at North Harbour Stadium.

Scott Higgins started in goal and Alex Brosque led the attack for Roar as Bleiberg rotated his injury-hit squad.

Despite being without the sidelined Michael Baird, Josh McCloughan and Matt McKay, the Roar Coach began the game with three recognised strikers in the side, keeping his promise of an attacking approach and it paid dividneds.

Roar were ahead as early as the 10th minute when Royce Brownlie opened the scoring for the visitors.

Massimo Murdocca's through ball found Brownlie who fired home past Knights keeper Moss from the edge of the box with a low drive.

Just two minutes later Roar doubled their advantage. Reece Tollenaere's break down the right flank was spotted by Remo Buess whose pass unlocked the Knight's defence.

Tollenaere's cross found Brownlie once again and the big striker side-footed his second of the game.

Brownlie's joy turned to pain in the 18th minute though when he limped off after a heavy tackle and was replaced by substitute Jonathan Richter.

The Knights best chance of the first period fell to Noah Hickey just before the break when he latched on to a bouncing ball inside the penalty area but fired over the bar.

In the second half Reece Tollenaere added the third for Roar with a neat header to put the game beyond the reach of the home side.

Roar were cruising now and it was no surprise when in the dying minutes substitute Warren Moon met a cross at the near post and slid home the fourth for the visitors.

In injury time the hard-working Massimo Murdocca was rewarded for his efforts when he beat his marker and completed the rout with the fifth goal.

The result leaves the Queenslanders with a chance of qualifying for the knockout phase of the competition and sets up an all important clash with Sydney FC in Cairns this Saturday.

Game Stats

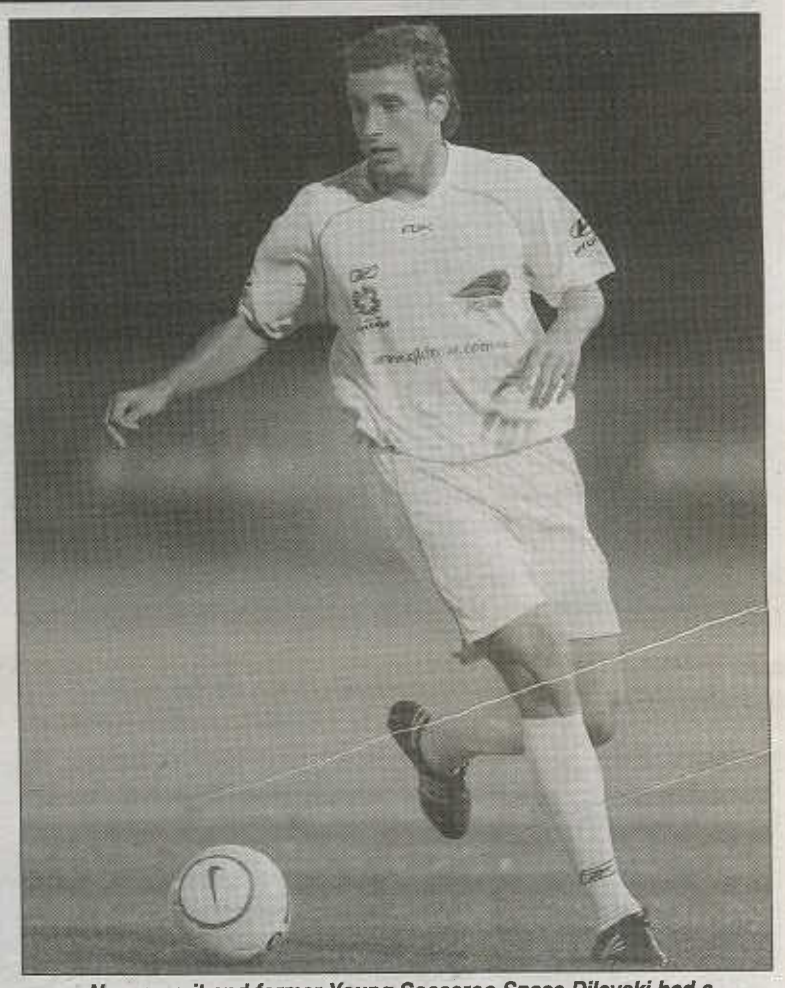
New Zealand Knights 0
Queensland Roar 5
(R Brownline 8', 9'; R Tollenaere 82'; W Moon 91'; M Murdocca 93')

Venue: North Harbour Stadium.
Crowd: 3,397 Referee: Peter O'Leary (NZ)

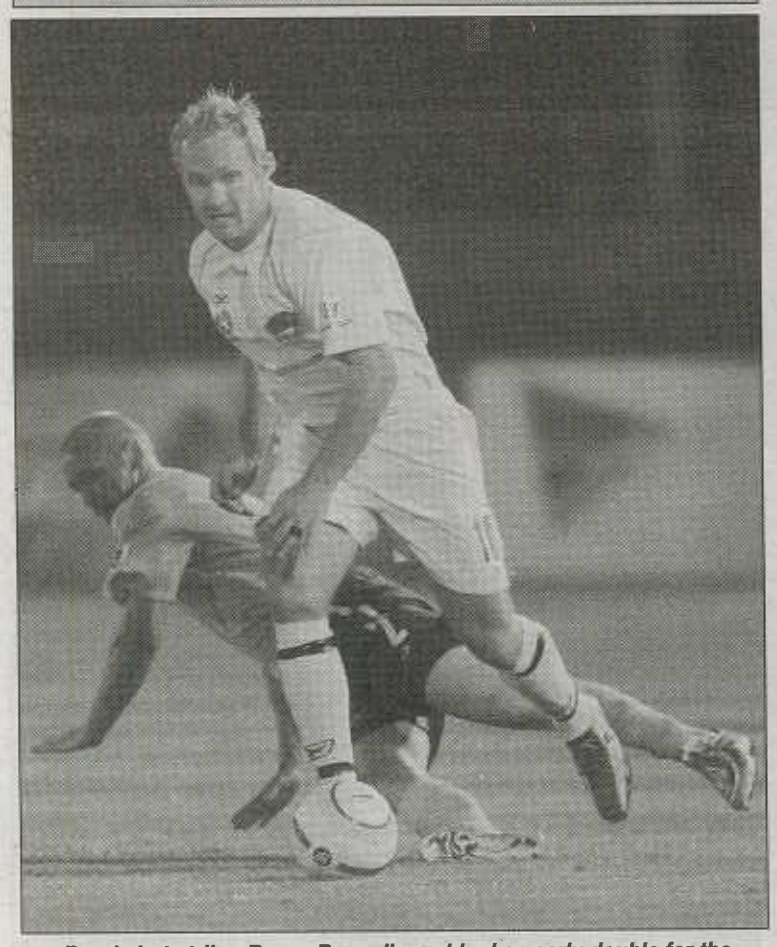
NEW ZEALAND KNIGHTS: Glen Moss (gk); Ronnie Bull, John Tambouras, Danny Hay, Neil Emblen, Steve Fitzsimmons, Ben Collett, Sean Devine, Noah Hickey (Jeremy Brockie 46'), Frank van Eijs, Xiaobin Zhang (Joshua Rose 77')

QUEENSLAND ROAR: Scott Higgins (gk); Todd Gava (Warren Moon 54'), Karl Dodd, Chad Gibson (capt), Remo Buess, Massimo Murdocca, Hyuk-Su Seo, Spase Dilevski, Reece Tollenaere, Royce Brownlie (Jonathan Richter 16'); Alex Brosque (Ben Griffin 76')

Yellow Cards: Hay (21') (NZK)



New recruit and former Young Socceroo Spase Dilevski had a impressive performance against the hapless Knights



Roar's hot striker Royce Brownlie grabbed an early double for the Queenslanders but limped off minutes later against the New Zealand Knights

Yorke refuses to be subbed

Sydney coach Pierre Littbarski said he planned to replace Yorke after the first goal, but the Trinidad and Tobago international was desperate to get his name on the scoresheet so played the full game.

"Dwight refused to come from the pitch," Littbarski said.

"He wanted to score, but he set up the second goal very beautifully. We have to work on his fitness still, it's still not enough to play 90 minutes."

"We didn't expect it, but he played 90 minutes tonight and that's helping his (fitness) a lot also.

Littbarski said the Mariners put up a tough fight for the first 25 minutes, but after making some half-time changes Sydney started to dominate.

"We deserved the victory, we were the better team, especially in the second half, and I'm happy that we escaped the first 25 minutes," Littbarski said. Mariners coach Lawrie McKinna said Spencer was gutted after gifting Sydney its first goal.

"We were playing well in the second half, but you just can't afford to make mistakes at the edge of the box like Noel Spencer did, and he knows it himself, he's gutted," McKinna said.

"I thought we played very well for most of the game, obviously missing the penalty in the first half, was a real killer for us because we dipped a little bit after that."

"There was a lot of good things which came out of the game, a lot of good performances and some good football, and a great crowd turning up for a pre-season game."

A-LEAGUE PRE-SEASON COMPETITION STATISTICS

GROUP A

	GP	W	D	L	Streak	GF	GA	PTS
Melbourne Victory FC	**2**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**W1**	**2**	**1**	**4**
Adelaide United FC	2	0	2	0	D2	3	3	2
Newcastle Jets FC	2	0	2	0	D2	2	2	2
Perth Glory FC	2	0	1	1	L1	2	3	1

Saturday 6 August
Perth Glory vs Newcastle Jets - 7:00pm - Members Equity Stadium
Melbourne Victory vs Adelaide United - 7:00pm Olympic Park

GROUP B

	GP	W	D	L	Streak	GF	GA	PTS
Sydney FC	**2**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**W2**	**5**	**1**	**6**
Queensland Roar FC	2	1	0	1	W1	6	3	3
Central Coast Mariners FC	2	1	0	1	L1	3	3	3
New Zealand Knights FC	2	0	0	2	L2	1	8	0

Saturday 6 August
New Zealand Knights vs Central Coast Mariners - 7:00pm North Harbour Stadium
Queensland Roar vs Sydney FC - 7:00pm Barlow Park, Cairns

Semi-Finals Draw
Saturday 13 August - Winner Group A or B vs Runner-Up Group A or B - 8pm
Sunday 14 August - Winner Group A or B vs Runner Up Group A or B - 5pm
Final to be played on the 20th August at 8pm venue TBA

NSW WINTER SUPER LEAGUE
THE BATTLE FOR FINALS SPOTS

SOCCER NSW

LATE GOALS LEAVE BULLS WITH WOODEN SPOON

Bobo sparks later Rage revival

A Western Rage player takes front position in this aerial contest against a Fairfield Bulls opponent

Fairfield Bulls	2
Western Rage	2

By Greg Stock

Western Rage are making a habit of scoring goals late to rescue matches and they did it again this week, scoring twice in ten minutes to put the final nail in the Fairfield Bulls coffin for 2005.

Down 2-0 and looking like they were sinking fast, the Rage scored twice against the run of play to snatch a valuable point and send the Bulls home with the Winter Super League wooden spoon.

With Marc Hoenselaars watching proceedings from the grandstand, it was all up to the other half of the dynamic duo, Matthew Borg, and he didn't disappoint Bulls fans. Borg had a hand in both his side's goals, including a well worked one-two, which led to Michael Dowling's goal. He worked himself to a standstill as his side's main target man.

But at the other end it was Mr Excitement, Nenos Bobo, that all but single-handedly rescued his side from oblivion. Engaged in a battle royal to avoid the bottom three, fatigued Fairfield were inspired by Bobo in the final minutes. He scored an individual goal against the run of play and then set up Ismael Arrarte for the equaliser, three minutes into stoppage time.

While the Rage will take their points any way they come at this critical stage of the season, it was injuries to Nahuel Arrarte and Mauricio Islas in a physical contest, that could see them miss a couple of weeks with injury.

MINOTAURS BERRIED BY SURGING CANTERBURY

HURSTVILLE CITY MINOTAURS	1
CANTERBURY-MARRICKVILLE	4

By Greg Stock

Canterbury-Marrickville coach Laki Konistis admits he gets a little embarrassed when the term 'supercoach' is thrown about, but after winning five from five, the fans of the league's oldest surviving club are starting to crow.

In second place and just eight points behind league leaders, F.C. Bossy Liverpool with a game in hand, the Berries are a real chance of making a late charge for Premiership honours, providing they can get over third-placed Dulwich Hill this Wednesday night (tomorrow) in their rescheduled match at Melita Stadium.

At Rockdale Sports Centre on a warm Sunday afternoon, they were a class above the Minotaurs who tried valiantly but just weren't in the same league as their finals bound opponents. Another solid performance from Damon Collina set up the win for the high-flying Berries.

"The mood around the club is sensational and I know that is the reason why we are confident and playing some good football," said Konistis. "We aren't getting carried away yet, but we know that if we can win a couple more we just might be able to put some pressure on Bossy and open this competition up a bit."

Without the flu-ridden Archie Kotsopoulos and holidaying Arthur Diles, the Berries were clinical, scoring twice in each half to make sure of the points. Kosta Lagoudakis and Matthew Ferreira had solid games for the Minotaurs, who will need to win two of their remaining four games to have any chance of avoiding relegation.

DENIS THE MENACE STUNS TIGERS

Northern Tigers	0
Hurstville ZSC	1

By Paul Goodwin

Northern Tigers coach, Fred Mesiti would feel dejected after Hurstville ZSC snatched a goal in the last few minutes of a very tight game at Parklands Oval and effectively ended his team's finals prospects.

Jason Vella was awarded a free kick, just inside the Hurstville half, and sent the ball to Denis Alilovic. Tigers' keeper, Dean McCreath, can feel unlucky not to have made the save after the ball took a nasty bounce, countering his diving attempt to make the stop.

The game started at a frantic pace with both Ante Jusic and Eddie Adam causing the Tigers' defence some grief and Vella supporting well in the midfield.

Big defender, Maurice Aliberti, was given the job of marking the elusive Adam, and Nathan Hopley had the job of keeping the lively Vella quiet.

One of the best of Hurstville's earlier chances had also come from Denis Alilovic, a shot which McCreath could only parry, but Aliberti cleared off the line.

The Tigers' only real chance came when Michael McCrory played the ball to an unmarked Hopley and with just Ante Pervan to beat, the burly Tigers' striker put the shot wide.

Both sides had their chances to score in the first half, but could not capitalise on their opportunities.

From the restart McCrory took a long-range shot to test Pervan, who had to contend with the sun in his eyes, but the keeper easily caught the ball.

Hurstville had a chance to open their account when Tony Alilovic put a ball past the Tigers defence, but his brother, Denis, was not up to the task

Tigers were starting to get on top of Hurstville and were unlucky when McCrory hit the post, with Pervan easily beaten.

The home team applied more pressure and dominated the last 30 minutes of play without being able to score.

McCrory and Tom Spencer both missed chances to put the game beyond Hurstville and when Adam was stretchered off in the 56th minute, Hurstville lost their way a little up front.

The deadlock was finally broken when Denis Alilovic scored in the 89th minute. It was a nervous ZSC coach, John Gagro, who had to wait for Nick Asargiotis to finally blow for full time, while his Tigers counterpart was understandably not too happy with the way things went.

"I was disappointed with the result, as we outplayed Hurstville in the second half. We did everything but score," Mesiti said.

NORTHERN TIGERS 0

HURSTVILLE ZSC 1
(D Alilovic 89')
@Parklands Oval, Mt Colah.

NORTHERN TIGERS: Dean McCreath - Dave Provan, Maurice Aliberti, Anthony Mittiga (C), Nathan Hopley (Matt Hunter 85) - Marcus Frost, Tom Spencer, Paul Davies, Scott Ryan (Danny Hurwitz 52) - Michael McCrory, Ben Jenke
Subs not used: Ivan Aul, Jason Mesiti and Matt Mesiti
Coach: Fred Mesiti

HURSTVILLE ZSC: Ante Pervan – Richie Plesa (C), Paul Bilokapic, Joe Vrkic, Ile Tarcan - Ante Jusic, Danny Georges (Costello de Andre 92), Jason Vella, Tony Alilovic, - Eddie Adam (Kristian Tarkes 56), Denis Alilovic
Subs not used: Ante Lupo and Sam Gerwargis
Coach: John Gagro

Referee: Nick Asargiotis
Assistant Referees: David Finlay and Kris Griffiths-Jones
Yellow Card: McCrory (NT) 90.

SOCCER NSW

NSW WINTER SUPER LEAGUE
THE BATTLE FOR FINALS SPOTS

STANMORE SHOCKS SHARKS

BAILLIE AND OBEID STAR AS HAWKS SWOOP ON ANOTHER VICTIM

Stanmore Hawks	2
Sutherland Sharks	0

By Paul Goodwin

Telling touches near goal from player-coach Scott Baillie and a whole-hearted performance from Omar Obeid, enabled Stanmore to shock another finals aspirant, as they beat Sutherland 2-0 at Pratten Park.

Baillie rescued his side in the first half with a goal-line clearance, when a powerful shot from Jimmy Bakis had keeper Steve Tolios beaten all ends up. He later scored a goal of his own from much the same spot.

The shot, from Bakis, had followed a spell of intense pressure by the Sharks, in a first half where both sides worked hard to gain an edge.

Moments earlier, a long ball over the top found Bakis running through intelligently to clip the ball past the keeper, but it flew just over the Stanmore bar.

Encouraged by this, the Sharks pressed even harder and in the 33rd minute, Bakis was presented with the great chance at close range.

Baillie, operating in midfield, but covering plenty in defence as well, was there to tidy up when danger loomed.

That let-off showed that the Sharks were well in the game in the first half, but the Hawks had their chances too.

Michael Cindric nodded just wide in the 15th minute, and Sam Awad made a mess of a great ball in from Neil Philippou, letting the ball run away from him, when one-on-one with Kurt Van Arrkels in the 26th minute.

The second half was the 'Baillie and Obeid show', though Sharks' defender, Ben Spruce, hit a low shot that just missed the right post in the 49th minute, to show that it was not all one way traffic.

A Stanmore corner on the left in the 60th minute, spelt disaster for Sutherland.

Philippou's well-directed kick to the near post, was exquisitely nodded on by Obeid, and there at the far post to slam the ball into the roof of the Sutherland net was Baillie.

In the 84th minute, having looked to expose Sutherland on the break repeatedly, Stanmore had Obeid racing through from inside his own half with Philippou in support in the middle.

Drawing the last defender and advancing to within 30 yards of goal, Obeid squared the ball unselfishly to his striking partner.

Philippou was able to clip the ball past Van Arkkels with ease, to seal a result that probably solves most of Stanmore's relegation worries.

"If we had had this team at the start of the season, we'd have been in the top three for sure," Obeid pointed out after the game.

The jubilant Hawks have certainly improved in recent weeks and this win, having already knocked off other semi-finals contenders, FC Bossy Liverpool and Fraser Park, is clear evidence of their true abilities.

STANMORE HAWKS 2
(S Baillie 60', N Phillippou 84')

SUTHERLAND SHARKS 0
@Pratten Park, Ashfield.

STANMORE HAWKS: Steve Tolios - Michael Cindric, Luke Casserly, John Theodoropoulos (C), George Skoulos (Dimitri Nicolaou 67) - Max Sevares (David James 46), Hidetaka Ishii, Scott Baillie, Sam Awad (Robert Mileski 67) - Omar Obeid, Neil Philippou
Subs not used: Jason Saba, Kris Phyliatou
Player/Coach: Scott Baillie

SUTHERLAND SHARKS: Kurt Van Arrkels – Paul Karbon, Enzo Sansone, Ben Spruce – Monte Priengle, Peter Feehan (Chris Hunt 75), Daki Falcon (Matthew Keep 61), Matt Smith (Andrew Smith 73), Sasha Tirovski - Iain Macdonald (C), Jimmy Bakis

Subs not used: Adam Kurtz

Coach: Stewart Porter
Referee: Alex Spiroski

Assistant Referees: Damien Wanstall and Tomasz Posiewska

RAMS AND WANDERERS DROP PRECIOUS POINTS

MACARTHUR RAMS 2
HAJDUK WANDERERS 2

By Paul Goodwin

Macarthur had the first and last laugh against visiting Hajduk Wanderers United, but probably weren't smiling at the end, as the 2-2 draw at Lynwood Park almost certainly ended their finals aspirations.

With just four rounds remaining, eighth-placed Macarthur dropped seven points off fifth spot, now occupied by Hajduk, who slipped one position after a draw which left them with just one win from their last eight games.

The Rams, looking for a change of fortune following four straight losses, started brightly.

Macarthur made their intentions known, dominating possession and after 11 minutes the scoresheet showed it as well.

Matt Toogood took a throw, which found the Rams' leading goal-scorer, Paul Wither. He beat his marker and the Hajduk sweeper, on halfway, before running unchallenged to the box and driving the ball past Daniel Schwarzer.

After that setback Hajduk began to get more into the game. An 18th minute penalty awarded to Hajduk by referee Con Diomis wiped the smile off the faces of the Rams fans. Brendan Salameh was upended in the box by Rams' skipper, Wes Horne and Stephen Chipps stepped up and converted from the spot.

But Macarthur had the last laugh after the visiting Wanderers had led 2-1 in the 63rd minute from a fine Elsid Barkhousir goal.

Reliable Rams' team man Andrew Borg managed to fashion an equaliser with just 12 minutes remaining, to steal a point.

Hajduk started the better in the second period, missing some real chances.

"When you miss chances like that you think that it may not be your day," Hajduk coach Trevor Morgan said.

Fleet-footed substitute, Barkhousir, put things right for the visitors. He was slipped a clever ball from State schoolboy representative, Jason Trifero, which allowed Barkhousir to push the ball past Rams' keeper Ben Duggan.

The Rams pushed forward and with the introduction of Shane Hammond seemed to find something extra. It was a sustained attack down the left that led to Daniel McCann whipping the ball into the box to find local boy Borg, who flicked the ball through the hands of Schwarzer and into the far side of the net.

"It has been a tough month of football for us, but it was good to see the boys get something out of today," Rams' coach, Luke McGuire, said. "Hopefully this can spark a good run for us."

OWN GOAL COSTS UNI

Dulwich Hill	2
Sydney University	2

By Paul Goodwin

Sydney University missed a golden opportunity to make ground on the Super League pace-setters when they were held to a 2-2 draw by a ten-man Dulwich Hill at Arlington Oval.

In a game that failed to reach any great heights, mainly due to the bumpy playing surface, an own goal from Uni sweeper, Cormack Begley, in the 88th minute, gave Dulwich a share of the points in a game which was, in many ways, dominated by 'the students'.

A Dulwich Hill player shields the ball from his Sydney University opponent

The home side started the better, but soon relinquished their ascendency when Harry James was shown his second yellow card, this time for dissent, after no more than 15 minutes.

Uni gradually came into the game with Luke McDougall and Brad Wiblen prominent.

'Dully' held out gamely until the 43rd minute, when Wiblen latched onto a loose ball in the home team's box and lashed an unstoppable volley into the net.

Uni had the better of the possession in the second half, but Dulwich were still looking increasingly dangerous on the break, with the pace of Tony Faria a constant threat.

'The students' really should have put Dulwich to the sword. Rob Smithies missed a sitter, created by the in-form Daisuke Nakajama, and Marc Coughlan and McDougall also had good chances.

Dulwich made University pay for their laxity in front of goal. Vastly experienced Luke Vincent sent a quick free kick to Dean Storey, who held off the attentions of the Uni defence and slotted past goalkeeper, Chad Taylor.

Uni restored their advantage soon after through the head of Nathan Moulds; but it was probably a goal that the Dulwich keeper would prefer to forget.

An aerial duel between Dulwich Hill and Sydney University

Moulds has been in great scoring form for 'The students' and instrumental in their late season push for the finals.

Despite having lost Nakajama and Dan Felton to injury, it seemed University would hold on for the win, until their defence failed to deal with a long throw from Dulwich, late in the game. After a scramble in the box, Begley was the unlucky man to get the final touch on the ball, which flew into his own net.

(With thanks to Dan Felton)

NSW WINTER SUPER LEAGUE
THE BATTLE FOR FINALS SPOTS

BOSSY HITS THE SKIDS

Leader loses again as Austin double lifts Dragons to fourth

Fraser Park Dragons	2
F.C. Bossy Liverpool	1

Just four weeks out from the finals series, the pressure is starting to tell on FC Bossy after suffering its second successive defeat in as many weeks. Fraser Park won their clash 2-1 against the Winter Super League top guns.

Dragons coach Ian Gillan remained philosophical about the result. "It was a strange sort of game, my only relief was that we got the three points," said Gillan.

Bossy's star-studded lineup began to exert its superiority, however it was within a few minutes that the match was decided. Liam Austin put away a Terry Atsas cross for goal number one, before he stepped up to calmly convert his second goal from the penalty spot after Archie Markopoulos was brought down.

Having scaled the competition table, Bossy showed only glimpses of their real form and are now in danger of being overhauled by second-placed Canterbury-Marrickville. The Berries who easily won their clash with the Minotaurs 4-1 have the opportunity to move within five points of the league leaders with a win on Wednesday night (tomorrow) against Dulwich Hill.

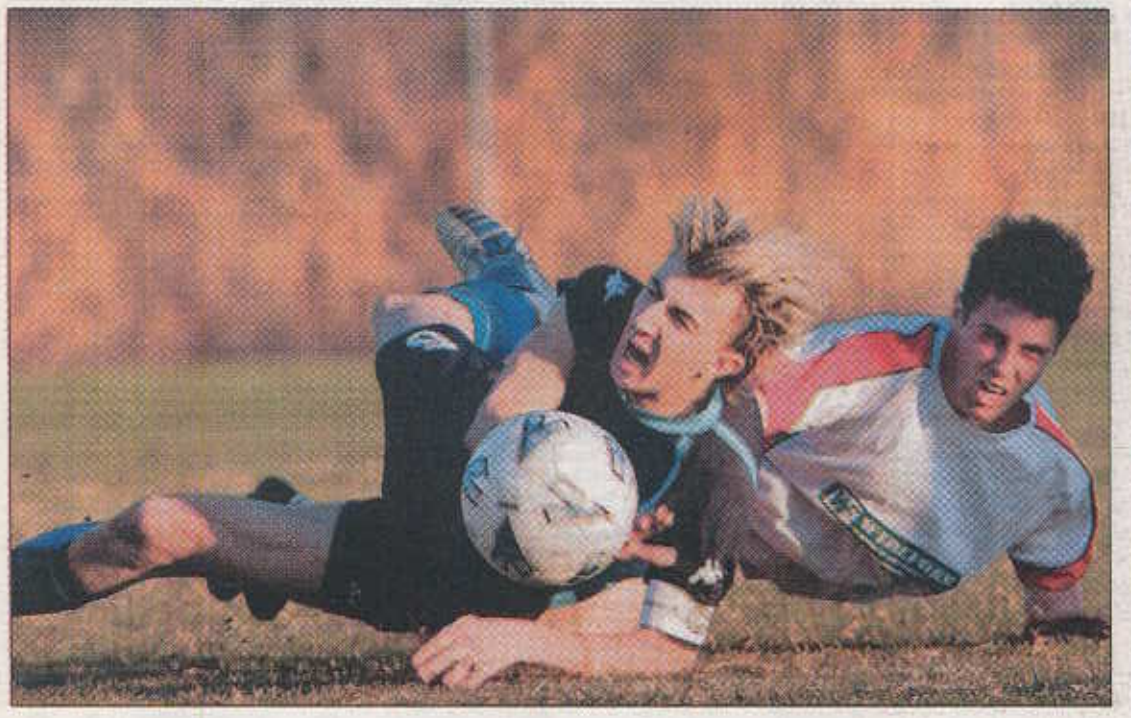
"This competition is far from over," said F.C.Bossy Liverpool coach Mile Todorovski. "We didn't look like a team today and we are struggling to for any direction. We have a number of teams chasing us down so we need to rediscover ourselves, and fast."

Bossy's best moments came early in the second half after Aleksander Asanovic had been introduced off the substitutes bench for the injured Saso Boskovski. With Nick Bosevski up front, the two strikers gave Bossy a real focus and if not for some acrobatic saves from Dragons goalkeeper Stacy Alogdellis, the game could have been over. The league's top scorer put one past Alogdellis inside the final two minutes, but he did bomb a couple of clear chances when he elected to take on defenders rather than square the ball to the unmarked Bosevski.

Without the injured Steve Karavatakis and the suspended Michael Kladis, Fraser Park did enough to suggest that they will be more than nuisance value come September. Solid games from Markopoulos and Greg Collins were a highlight, as was the form of Portuguese import Jose Fernandes, who is still getting used to Australian conditions.

Evangelos Petratos showed his versatility with a sublime performance in the role as sweeper.

Fraser Park players celebrate one of Liam Austin's (far right) two goals



Liverpool Bossy captain Nihad Sehic (left) feels the power of a Michael Prentice challenge

Michael Prentice (right) contests a header with Bossy's George Nohra (left)

NSW PREMIER STATE & YOUTH RESULTS & TABLES

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 24

FIRST GRADE: Fairfield City Lions 2 (T Devrimol 39/86m) Schofields Scorpions 1 (R Toomey 83m), Camden Tigers 0 Inter Lions 2 (N Tome 9m C Paradisis 86m), Bathurst 75 1 (G Dowling 27m) White City 0, Ryde City 2 (L Marshall 33m A McKee 70m) Blacktown Spartans 2 (S Mort 54/83m), Mt Pritchard 2 (G Orcajo 24m P Marosevic 92m) Hills Brumbies 1 (M Ghobrial 35m), Gladesville Spirit 2 (T Simpson 7/48m) Belmore Hercules 2 (J Skulfris 10m P Fleming 35m).

GRADE 20: Fairfield City Lions 2 Schofields Scorpions 3, Camden Tigers 0 Inter Lions 0, Bathurst 75 1 White City 2, Ryde City 3 Blacktown Spartans 0 (Win by Forfeit), Mt Pritchard 2 Hills Brumbies 1, Gladesville Spirit 1 Belmore Hercules 2.

RESCHEDULED GAME: ROUND 14:
GRADE 20: Schofields Scorpions 4 Ryde City 3.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 24 FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Fairfield City Lions	22	16	3	3	77	25	52	51
Schofields Scorpions	22	16	2	4	56	20	36	50
Inter Lions	22	15	3	4	66	20	46	48
Belmore Hercules	22	13	1	8	38	27	11	40
Mt Druitt Town	22	12	2	8	45	35	10	38
Gladesville Spirit	22	10	5	7	30	31	-1	35
Mt Pritchard	22	10	3	9	38	33	5	33
Hills Brumbies	22	9	3	10	31	36	-5	30
Ryde City	22	7	5	10	34	44	-10	26
White City	23	7	2	14	26	53	-27	23
Blacktown Spartans	23	5	4	14	34	62	-28	19
Bathurst '75	22	3	2	17	25	65	-40	11
Camden Tigers	22	2	3	17	15	64	-49	9

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 24 GRADE 20

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Mt Pritchard	22	19	2	1	93	17	76	59
Schofields Scorpions	22	16	3	3	78	35	43	51
Inter Lions	22	14	4	4	49	29	20	46
Fairfield City Lions	22	14	3	5	77	38	39	45
Belmore Hercules	22	12	3	7	55	29	26	39
Gladesville Spirit	22	10	6	6	57	33	24	36
Hills Brumbies	22	9	7	6	48	29	19	34
Mt Druitt Town	22	8	3	11	48	54	-6	27
Camden Tigers	22	7	4	11	38	63	-25	25
Blacktown Spartans	23	5	3	15	30	62	-32	18
Ryde City	22	5	2	15	33	63	-30	17
White City	23	3	1	19	31	99	-68	10
Bathurst '75	22	1	1	20	20	106	-86	4

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO: RESCHEDULED GAMES: ROUND 13

FIRST GRADE: Springwood SC 2 (D Fillingham 4m M Halse 8m) Kellyville Kolts 0, Balmain SC 3 (D Hardwick 4m J Bracewell 34m J Richardson 57m) Sydney Cedars SC 0, Prospect United 0 UNSW 1 (K Ikeuchi 80m), Fogolar Wanderers 0 Hakoah 3 (A Joseph 42m N Levi 56m R Neumann 67m).

GRADE 21: Springwood SC 4 Kellyville Kolts 5, Balmain SC 4 Sydney Cedars SC 5, Prospect United 0 UNSW 3, Fogolar Wanderers 3 Hakoah 1.

GRADE 19: Springwood SC 0 Kellyville Kolts 3, Balmain SC 1 Sydney Cedars SC 9, Prospect United 0 UNSW 4, Fogolar Wanderers 1 Hakoah 6.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO: ROUND 17 FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Springwood	17	12	4	1	42	13	29	40
UNSW	16	11	5	0	38	10	28	38
Hakoah	16	9	4	3	29	14	15	31
Balmain	16	10	1	5	34	22	12	31
Fogolar Wanderers	16	7	4	5	20	20	0	25
Sydney Cedars	16	7	3	6	24	22	2	24
Auburn Star	16	4	3	9	22	27	-5	15
Kellyville Kolts	16	3	2	11	22	31	-9	11
Prospect United	17	2	1	14	10	41	-31	7
Greenisland	16	2	1	13	14	55	-41	7

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO: ROUND 17 GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
UNSW	17	14	2	1	58	15	43	44
Hakoah	16	10	2	4	39	17	22	32
Fogolar Wanderers	17	9	4	4	43	36	7	31
Prospect United	17	8	4	5	39	34	5	28
Sydney Cedars	16	7	3	6	24	26	-2	24
Springwood	17	5	5	7	27	29	-2	20
Kellyville Kolts	16	5	3	8	39	41	-2	18
Balmain	16	4	2	10	26	37	-11	14
Greenisland	16	3	2	11	25	59	-34	11
Auburn Star	16	2	3	11	25	51	-26	9

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO: ROUND 17 GRADE 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
UNSW	17	11	5	1	47	18	29	38
Hakoah	15	8	5	2	41	21	20	29
Sydney Cedars	16	8	4	4	47	31	16	28
Prospect United	17	7	6	4	42	29	13	27
Auburn Star	16	7	3	6	20	31	-11	24
Kellyville Kolts	15	6	4	5	38	27	11	22
Springwood	16	5	2	9	23	38	-15	17
Balmain	16	4	4	8	35	45	-10	16
Greenisland	15	4	3	8	36	42	-6	15
Fogolar Wanderers	17	1	2	14	24	71	-47	5

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE: RESCHEDULED GAMES: ROUND 1

FIRST GRADE: Pratten Magpies 2 Lithgow Workmen 2.

RESERVE GRADE: Pratten Magpies 7 Lithgow Workmen 2.

RESCHEDULED FROM ROUND 13

FIRST GRADE: East Coast Magic 1 Gladesville United 0.

RESERVE GRADE: East Coast Magic 1 Gladesville United 2.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE: ROUND 16 FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Colo Colo	16	12	3	1	39	16	23	39
Hawkesbury City	16	8	4	4	40	28	12	28
Gladesville United	15	8	4	3	34	28	6	28
Trasandinos	16	8	3	5	50	21	29	27
East Coast Magic	15	7	3	5	36	21	15	24
Roosters FC	16	6	5	5	38	24	14	23
Luddenham United	16	5	2	9	29	40	-11	17
Gazy Lansvale	15	3	5	7	13	27	-14	14
Pratten Magpies	14	2	2	10	20	57	-37	8
Lithgow Workmen	15	2	1	12	12	49	-37	7

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE: ROUND 16 RESERVE GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Colo Colo	16	12	3	1	39	16	23	39
Hawkesbury City	16	8	4	4	40	28	12	28
Gladesville United	15	8	4	3	34	28	6	28
Trasandinos	16	8	3	5	50	21	29	27
East Coast Magic	15	7	3	5	36	21	15	24
Roosters FC	16	6	5	5	38	24	14	23
Luddenham United	16	5	2	9	29	40	-11	17
Gazy Lansvale	15	3	5	7	13	27	-14	14
Pratten Magpies	14	2	2	10	20	57	-37	8
Lithgow Workmen	15	2	1	12	12	49	-37	7

Arrive alive
NSW GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 20

UNDER 12: Macarthur Rams 1 NWS Koalas 1, Marconi Stallions 0 Sutherland Association 1, Penrith Nepean United 1 Manly United FC 1, Southern Branch 1 St George Saints 0, Gladesville Ravens 0 Central Coast United FC 1, Sydney University 4 Bathurst City 0, UNWS Soccer Club 0 Northern Tigers 3.

UNDER 14: Macarthur Rams 0 NWS Koalas 0, Marconi Stallions 2 Sutherland Association 3, Penrith Nepean United 3 Manly United FC 1, Southern Branch 1 St George Saints 2, Gladesville Ravens 0 Central Coast United FC 2, Sydney University 1 Bathurst City 2, UNWS Soccer Club 1 Northern Tigers 2.

UNDER 16: Macarthur Rams 1 NWS Koalas 2, Marconi Stallions 2 Sutherland Association 1, Penrith Nepean United 2 Manly United FC 0, Southern Branch 0 St George Saints 2, Gladesville Ravens 1 Central Coast United FC 2, Sydney University 0 Bathurst City 8, UNWS Soccer Club 0 Northern Tigers 3.

RESCHEDULED GAMES: ROUND 16:
UNDER 12: Manly United FC 0 Southern Branch 0.
UNDER 14: Manly United FC 2 Southern Branch 1.
UNDER 16: Manly United FC 2 Southern Branch 0.

Arrive alive
NSW GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 20 UNDER 12

	P	W	D	L	B	F	A	D	Pt
Manly United FC	20	13	5	1	1	35	6	29	47
Penrith Nepean United	20	12	4	3	1	42	10	32	43
Sutherland Association	20	11	5	3	1	53	9	44	41
Southern Branch	20	11	5	3	1	37	12	25	41
Northern Tigers	20	9	3	6	2	39	20	19	36
Central Coast United	20	9	6	4	1	30	11	19	36
NW Sydney Koalas	20	9	4	6	1	27	16	11	34
Gladesville Ravens	20	7	3	8	2	28	23	5	30
Macarthur Rams	20	7	5	7	1	26	30	-4	29
Sydney University	20	7	0	11	2	33	36	-3	27
Marconi Stallions	20	6	4	9	1	32	35	-3	25
St George Saints	20	5	4	10	1	20	25	-5	22
Blacktown Association	20	2	3	13	2	16	34	-18	15
Bathurst City Panthers	20	2	3	13	2	14	48	-34	15
UNSW	20	2	2	15	1	9	66	-57	11

B denotes a Bye scoring 3 points and 3 Goal.

Arrive alive
NSW GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 20 UNDER 14

	P	W	D	L	B	F	A	D	Pt
Sutherland Association	20	16	3	0	1	57	14	43	54
Macarthur Rams	20	15	4	0	1	57	12	45	52
St George Saints	20	14	2	3	1	50	12	38	47
Penrith Nepean United	20	14	1	4	1	55	17	38	46
NW Sydney Koalas	20	12	2	5	1	63	23	40	41
Central Coast United	20	12	0	7	1	40	24	16	39
Bathurst City Panthers	20	7	3	8	2	36	24	12	30
Manly United FC	20	7	4	8	1	33	36	-3	28
Northern Tigers	20	5	3	10	2	28	40	-12	24
Marconi Stallions	20	6	2	11	1	38	37	1	23
Gladesville Ravens	20	4	3	11	2	28	54	-26	21
Southern Branch	20	3	7	9	1	21	34	-13	19
Blacktown Association	20	1	5	12	2	18	37	-21	14
Sydney University	20	2	2	14	2	16	60	-44	14
UNSW	20	1	1	17	1	13	67	-54	7

B denotes a Bye scoring 3 points and 3 Goal.

Arrive alive
NSW GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 20 UNDER 16

	P	W	D	L	B	F	A	D	Pt
NW Sydney Koalas	20	17	2	0	1	90	11	79	56
Penrith Nepean United	20	15	1	3	1	49	23	26	49
St George Saints	20	13	4	2	1	54	15	39	46
Central Coast United	20	11	4	4	1	44	11	33	40
Bathurst City Panthers	20	10	2	6	2	52	20	32	38
Manly United FC	20	9	5	5	1	38	18	20	35
Sutherland Association	20	9	3	7	1	44	17	27	33
Southern Branch	20	8	4	7	1	29	26	3	31
Blacktown Association	20	6	4	8	2	32	26	6	28
Macarthur Rams	20	6	5	8	1	31	22	9	26
Marconi Stallions	20	6	4	9	1	32	30	2	25
Northern Tigers	20	3	2	13	2	16	49	-33	17
Gladesville Ravens	20	2	3	13	2	23	63	-40	15
UNSW	20	1	3	15	1	9	61	-52	9
Sydney University	20	1	0	17	2	13	104	-91	9

B denotes a Bye scoring 3 points and 3 Goal.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 24

GRADE 13: Wollongong Wolves 3 St George Saints 1, Sydney Olympic 2 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 0, Sutherland Sharks 0 Bankstown City Cubs 0, Sydney United 0 Blacktown City 0, Parramatta Eagles 0 Marconi Stallions 4, Gladesville Spirit 0 Macarthur Rams 2, Hajduk Wanderers United 0 Manly United FC 2.

GRADE 14: Wollongong Wolves 1 St George Saints 1, Sydney Olympic 1 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 2, Sutherland Sharks 1 Bankstown City Cubs 1, Sydney United 0 Blacktown City 0, Parramatta Eagles 0 Marconi Stallions 0, Gladesville Spirit 0 Macarthur Rams 0, Hajduk Wanderers United 3 Manly United FC 1.

GRADE 15: Wollongong Wolves 0 St George Saints 3, Sydney Olympic 1 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 0, Sutherland Sharks 2 Bankstown City Cubs 2, Sydney United 0 Blacktown City 1, Parramatta Eagles 2 Marconi Stallions 2, Gladesville Spirit 1 Macarthur Rams 2, Hajduk Wanderers United 0 Manly United FC 1.

GRADE 16: Wollongong Wolves 0 St George Saints 2, Sydney Olympic 2 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 1, Sutherland Sharks 1 Bankstown City Cubs 0, Sydney United 0 Blacktown City 0, Parramatta Eagles 1 Marconi Stallions 0, Gladesville Spirit 1 Macarthur Rams 0, Hajduk Wanderers United 3 Manly United FC 0.

GRADE 18: Wollongong Wolves 2 St George Saints 2, Sydney Olympic 3 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 3, Sutherland Sharks 3 Bankstown City Cubs 0, Sydney United 0 Blacktown City 4, Parramatta Eagles 0 Marconi Stallions 3, Gladesville Spirit 4 Macarthur Rams 0, Hajduk Wanderers United 1 Manly United FC 1.

RESCHEDULED GAMES: ROUND 22

GRADE 14: Parramatta Eagles 0 Bankstown City Cubs 2, Macarthur Rams 0 Marconi Stallions 3 (Win by Forfeit).

RESCHEDULED FROM ROUND 20:
GRADE 13: Sydney Olympic 1 Manly United FC 1.
GRADE 14: Sydney Olympic 0 Manly United FC 2.
GRADE 15: Sydney Olympic 2 Manly United FC 1.
GRADE 16: Sydney Olympic 5 Manly United FC 2.
GRADE 18: Sydney Olympic 1 Manly United FC 2.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 24 GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown City Demons	24	20	3	1	82	9	73	63
Marconi Stallions	24	20	3	1	76	8	68	63
Parramatta Eagles	24	17	3	4	72	19	53	54
Macarthur Rams	24	14	2	8	44	42	2	44
Gladesville Spirit	24	13	3	8	47	34	13	42
Wollongong Wolves	24	9	4	11	30	38	-8	31
Manly United FC	24	8	7	9	35	53	-18	31
St George Saints	24	8	3	13	34	56	-22	27
Sydney United	24	7	5	12	25	44	-19	26
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	24	7	3	14	26	43	-17	24
Sydney Olympic	24	5	7	12	25	44	-19	22
Bankstown City Cubs	24	6	4	14	19	47	-28	22
Sutherland Sharks	24	2	9	13	23	49	-26	15
Hajduk Wanderers Utd	24	2	4	18	15	67	-52	10

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 24 GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	24	18	3	3	52	8	44	57
Sydney United	24	17	4	3	57	24	33	55
Blacktown City Demons	24	16	4	4	42	17	25	52
Parramatta Eagles	24	15	3	6	47	20	27	48
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	24	14	3	7	40	18	22	45
Bankstown City Cubs	24	14	2	8	35	28	7	44
Manly United FC	24	12	2	10	46	32	14	38
Hajduk Wanderers Utd	24	9	8	7	26	19	7	35
Sutherland Sharks	24	8	4	12	28	46	-18	28
Sydney Olympic	24	3	8	13	20	43	-23	17
St George Saints	24	4	4	16	23	45	-22	16
Gladesville Spirit	24	2	8	14	8	41	-33	14
Macarthur Rams	24	2	6	16	11	49	-38	12
Wollongong Wolves	24	2	5	17	20	65	-45	11

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 24 GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	24	17	6	1	44	10	34	57
Bankstown City Cubs	24	14	6	4	40	23	17	48
Parramatta Eagles	24	14	4	6	44	25	19	46
Sutherland Sharks	24	12	7	5	50	31	19	43
Wollongong Wolves	24	13	3	8	37	26	11	42
St George Saints	24	11	8	5	44	28	16	41
Blacktown City Demons	24	11	6	7	31	22	9	39
Gladesville Spirit	24	9	7	8	28	15	13	34
Sydney United	24	7	7	10	24	33	-9	28
Sydney Olympic	24	8	4	12	19	36	-17	28
Manly United FC	24	8	1	15	26	41	-15	25
Macarthur Rams	24	4	4	16	20	47	-27	16
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	24	2	6	16	10	39	-29	12
Hajduk Wanderers Utd	24	3	1	20	14	55	-41	10

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 24 GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Gladesville Spirit	24	16	6	2	36	9	27	54
Blacktown City Demons	24	13	10	1	42	19	23	49
Sydney Olympic	24	15	4	5	46	24	22	49
Marconi Stallions	24	13	4	7	39	15	24	43
Parramatta Eagles	24	12	6	6	34	21	13	42
Bankstown City Cubs	24	13	3	8	29	17	12	42
Macarthur Rams	24	8	5	11	25	32	-7	29
Hajduk Wanderers Utd	24	7	6	11	27	35	-8	27
Sydney United	24	8	3	13	27	36	-9	27
Sutherland Sharks	24	7	6	11	21	32	-11	27
Wollongong Wolves	24	7	4	13	25	32	-7	25
St George Saints	24	7	3	14	21	47	-26	24
Manly United FC	24	4	6	14	18	42	-24	18
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	24	0	10	14	12	41	-29	10

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 24 GRADE 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	24	15	5	4	50	27	23	50
Gladesville Spirit	24	15	4	5	51	22	29	49
Sutherland Sharks	24	15	2	7	68	38	30	47
Manly United FC	24	13	6	5	50	40	10	45
Parramatta Eagles	24	13	2	9	47	30	17	41
Sydney Olympic	24	12	5	7	51	39	12	41
Blacktown City Demons	24	10	6	8	32	29	3	36
Wollongong Wolves	24	9	8	7	43	33	10	35
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers	24	8	6	10	31	43	-12	30
Hajduk Wanderers Utd	24	7	4	13	29	52	-23	25
Sydney United	23	5	6	12	37	49	-12	21
St George Saints	24	3	8	13	29	64	-35	17
Bankstown City Cubs	23	4	4	15	24	49	-25	16
Macarthur Rams	24	2	6	16	30	57	-27	12

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 24 CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Marconi Stallions	120	83	21	16	261	68	193	270
Blacktown City	120	70	29	21	229	96	133	239
Parramatta Eagles	120	71	18	31	244	115	129	231
Gladesville Spirit	120	55	28	37	170	121	49	193
Bankstown City Cubs	119	51	19	49	147	164	-17	172
Sutherland Sharks	120	44	28	48	190	196	-6	160
Sydney United	119	44	25	50	170	186	-16	157
Sydney Olympic	120	43	28	49	161	186	-25	157
Manly United FC	120	45	22	53	175	208	-33	157
Wollongong Wolves	120	40	24	56	155	194	-39	144
St George Saints	120	33	26	61	151	240	-89	125
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	120	31	28	61	119	184	-65	121
Macarthur Rams	120	30	23	67	130	227	-97	113
Hajduk Wanderers Utd	120	28	23	69	111	228	-117	107

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 20

GRADE 13: Parramatta Star 0 Fraser Park 0, Bathurst 75 Western 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1, Penrith Nepean United 2 Hills Brumbies 0, Granville Rage 1 Central Coast United 1, Northern Tigers 0 Schofields Scorpions 1, Dulwich Hill 2 Southern Branch 1.

GRADE 14: Parramatta Star 2 Fraser Park 1, Bathurst 75 Western 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1, Penrith Nepean United 1 Hills Brumbies 0, Granville Rage 0 Central Coast United 3, Northern Tigers 2 Schofields Scorpions 3, Dulwich Hill 1 Southern Branch 4.

GRADE 15: Parramatta Star 0 Fraser Park 2, Bathurst 75 Western 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2, Penrith Nepean United 0 Hills Brumbies 1, Granville Rage 1 Central Coast United 3, Dulwich Hill 1 Southern Branch 2.

GRADE 16: Parramatta Star 2 Fraser Park 2, Bathurst 75 Western 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2, Penrith Nepean United 5 Hills Brumbies 0, Granville Rage 1 Central Coast United 0, Dulwich Hill 2 Southern Branch 1.

GRADE 18: Parramatta Star 1 Fraser Park 1, Bathurst 75 Western 2 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 6, Penrith Nepean United 3 Hills Brumbies 1, Granville Rage 1 Central Coast United 2, Northern Tigers 1 Schofields Scorpions 3, Dulwich Hill 0 Southern Branch 0.

RESCHEDULED FROM ROUND 15:
GRADE 13: Fraser Park 0 Schofields Scorpions 0.
GRADE 14: Fraser Park 0 Schofields Scorpions 1.
GRADE 15: Fraser Park 1 Schofields Scorpions 0.

RESCHEDULED FROM ROUND 18:
GRADE 14: Parramatta Star 4 Southern Branch 1.
GRADE 16: Bathurst 75 Western 2 Dulwich Hill 2.
GRADE 18: Bathurst 75 Western 1 Dulwich Hill 0.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 20 GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Schofields Scorpions	19	13	4	2	30	13	17	43
Penrith Nepean United	19	10	7	2	34	14	20	37
Central Coast United	19	10	6	3	31	10	21	36
Dulwich Hill	19	8	5	6	37	27	10	29
Fraser Park	19	7	7	5	23	17	6	28
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	19	7	5	7	24	23	1	26
Southern Branch	19	5	6	8	19	21	-2	21
Bathurst '75 Western	19	4	9	6	14	19	-5	21
Northern Tigers	19	5	5	9	15	32	-17	20
Parramatta Star	19	4	7	8	24	30	-6	19
Granville Rage	19	4	7	8	28	44	-16	19
Hills Brumbies	19	2	2	15	13	42	-29	8

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 20 GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Parramatta Star	19	16	2	1	50	16	34	50
Schofields Scorpions	19	12	2	5	47	18	29	38
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	19	10	4	5	29	12	17	34
Southern Branch	19	10	3	6	33	30	3	33
Central Coast United	19	8	4	7	25	25	0	28
Granville Rage	19	8	3	8	31	25	6	27
Penrith Nepean United	19	6	6	7	25	28	-3	24
Bathurst '75 Western	19	6	5	8	29	32	-3	23
Fraser Park	19	6	4	9	22	18	4	22
Hills Brumbies	19	4	6	9	15	32	-17	18
Northern Tigers	19	3	4	12	25	49	-24	13
Dulwich Hill	19	2	3	14	17	63	-46	9

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 20 GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Schofields Scorpions	19	12	4	3	39	22	17	40
Penrith Nepean United	19	9	6	4	23	15	8	33
Central Coast United	19	10	2	7	40	28	12	32
Fraser Park	19	9	4	6	25	24	1	31
Bathurst '75 Western	19	8	6	5	27	22	5	30
Southern Branch	19	7	6	6	31	27	4	27
Granville Rage	19	8	3	8	28	29	-1	27
Dulwich Hill	19	7	5	7	25	21	4	26
Hills Brumbies	19	7	3	9	23	26	-3	24
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	19	5	4	10	20	27	-7	19
Northern Tigers	19	3	6	10	18	27	-9	15
Parramatta Star	19	3	3	13	17	48	-31	12

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 20 GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Northern Tigers	19	13	4	2	50	15	35	43
Schofields Scorpions	19	13	2	4	51	16	35	41
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	19	12	5	2	43	26	17	41
Penrith Nepean United	19	12	2	5	41	21	20	38
Hills Brumbies	19	9	5	5	29	23	6	32
Fraser Park	19	9	3	7	28	28	0	30
Dulwich Hill	19	7	3	9	32	34	-2	24
Parramatta Star	19	4	7	8	31	36	-5	19
Southern Branch	19	5	3	11	21	39	-18	18
Granville Rage	19	4	3	12	18	37	-19	15
Bathurst '75 Western	19	3	2	14	18	55	-37	11
Central Coast United	19	2	3	14	16	48	-32	9

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 20 GRADE 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Penrith Nepean United	19	19	0	0	75	13	62	57
Fraser Park	19	12	1	6	39	32	7	37
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	19	11	3	5	57	31	26	36
Central Coast United	19	11	2	6	46	34	12	35
Schofields Scorpions	19	10	3	6	52	45	7	33
Parramatta Star	19	10	2	7	43	40	3	32
Granville Rage	19	8	2	9	41	39	2	26
Hills Brumbies	19	7	2	10	31	40	-9	23
Dulwich Hill	19	5	2	12	28	48	-20	17
Bathurst '75 Western	19	5	0	14	21	64	-43	15
Northern Tigers	19	3	3	13	27	53	-26	12
Southern Branch	19	2	2	15	32	53	-21	8

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 20 CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Schofields Scorpions	95	60	15	20	219	114	105	195
Penrith Nepean United	95	56	21	18	198	91	107	189
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	95	45	21	29	173	119	54	156
Fraser Park	95	43	19	33	137	119	18	148
Central Coast United	95	41	17	37	158	145	13	140
Parramatta Star	95	37	21	37	165	170	-5	132
Granville Rage	95	32	18	45	146	174	-28	114
Southern Branch	95	29	20	46	136	170	-34	107
Hills Brumbies	95	29	18	48	111	163	-52	105
Dulwich Hill	95	29	18	48	139	193	-54	105
Northern Tigers	95	27	22	46	135	176	-41	103
Bathurst '75 Western	95	26	22	47	109	192	-83	100

DEVELOPMENT YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 21

GRADE 13: Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Mt Druitt Town 2, Ryde City 1 Belmore Hercules 1, Sydney University 4 Blacktown Spartans 5, Camden Tigers 0 Rockdale City Suns 2.

GRADE 14: Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Mt Druitt Town 2, Ryde City 1 Belmore Hercules 3, Sydney University 4 Blacktown Spartans 1, Camden Tigers 1 Rockdale City Suns 0.

GRADE 15: Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Mt Druitt Town 2, Ryde City 1 Belmore Hercules 1, Sydney University 2 Blacktown Spartans 0, Camden Tigers Rockdale City Suns Abandoned.

GRADE 16: Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Mt Druitt Town 0, Ryde City 4 Belmore Hercules 0, Sydney University 2 Blacktown Spartans 1, Camden Tigers Rockdale City Suns Postponed.

RESCHEDULED GAMES: ROUND 16:

GRADE 13: Sydney University 2 Hurstville City Minotaurs 1. **GRADE 14:** Sydney University 3 Hurstville City Minotaurs 1.

GRADE 15: Sydney University 0 Hurstville City Minotaurs 0.

GRADE 16: Sydney University 0 Hurstville City Minotaurs 1.

DEVELOPMENT YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 21 GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Belmore Hercules	21	12	8	1	47	16	31	44
Camden Tigers	21	11	5	5	56	29	27	38
Hurstville City Minotaurs	21	10	4	7	42	30	12	34
Rockdale City Suns	21	9	7	5	24	17	7	34
Blacktown Spartans	21	10	3	8	36	34	2	33
Mt Druitt Town	21	7	7	7	30	31	-1	28
Ryde City	21	2	5	14	16	62	-46	11
Sydney University	21	2	3	16	31	63	-32	9

DEVELOPMENT YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 21 GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Mt Druitt Town	21	19	1	1	55	10	45	58
Sydney University	21	14	3	4	66	24	42	45
Rockdale City Suns	21	9	4	8	31	25	6	31
Ryde City	21	7	3	11	22	40	-18	24
Blacktown Spartans	21	5	6	10	28	40	-12	21
Camden Tigers	21	6	2	13	25	48	-23	20
Hurstville City Minotaurs	21	4	7	10	16	35	-19	19
Belmore Hercules	21	3	8	10	19	40	-21	17

DEVELOPMENT YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 21 GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Mt Druitt Town	21	15	3	3	43	18	25	48
Rockdale City Suns	20	12	6	2	38	12	26	42
Ryde City	21	11	3	7	38	27	11	36
Belmore Hercules	21	9	8	4	28	19	9	35
Sydney University	21	6	7	8	23	25	-2	25
Blacktown Spartans	21	4	6	11	19	34	-15	18
Camden Tigers	20	5	2	13	23	42	-19	17
Hurstville City Minotaurs	21	2	3	16	18	53	-35	9

DEVELOPMENT YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 21 GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Ryde City	21	16	3	2	63	12	51	51
Hurstville City Minotaurs	21	12	6	3	33	13	20	42
Belmore Hercules	21	9	4	8	30	30	0	31
Camden Tigers	20	8	5	7	30	30	0	29
Rockdale City Suns	20	8	5	7	26	30	-4	29
Mt Druitt Town	21	7	4	10	25	36	-11	25
Blacktown Spartans	21	5	3	13	19	32	-13	18
Sydney University	21	2	2	17	22	65	-43	8

attack METROPOLITAN LEAGUE: RESCHEDULED GAMES: ROUND 16

GRADE 11: Manly Warringah Association 2 Bankstown Association 0, St George Association 1 Blacktown Association 0, Ku-Ring-Gai Association 1 Canterbury Association 6.

GRADE 12: Manly Warringah Association 4 Bankstown Association 0, St George Association 0 Blacktown Association 0, Ku-Ring-Gai Association 2 Canterbury Association 0.

ROUND 17:

GRADE 11: Canterbury Association 0 Granville Association 0, Central Coast Association 1 Southern Branch 2, Sutherland Association 5 Manly Warringah Association 0.

GRADE 12: Canterbury Association 1 Granville Association 0, Central Coast Association 0 Southern Branch 0, Sutherland Association 0 Manly Warringah Association 5.

RESCHEDULED FROM ROUND 18:

GRADE 11: Illawarra Association 2 Eastern Suburbs Association 0. **GRADE 12:** Illawarra Association 6 Eastern Suburbs Association 0.

attack METROPOLITAN LEAGUE: GRADE 11 FINAL SERIES: ROUND 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Sutherland Association	20	14	4	2	67	17	50	46
Blacktown Association	19	14	4	1	48	14	34	46
St George Assoc	20	14	3	3	46	16	30	45
Macarthur	20	12	8	0	37	13	24	44
Illawarra	20	10	4	6	36	23	13	34
Canterbury	20	10	3	7	28	33	-5	33
Granville	20	8	5	7	31	25	6	29
Eastern Suburbs	20	7	7	6	31	27	4	28
Nepean Association	20	7	5	8	35	28	7	26
Manly Warringah	20	7	5	8	29	34	-5	26
Southern Districts	20	6	6	8	22	31	-9	24
Bankstown Assoc	20	6	2	12	16	41	-25	20
Gladesville Hornsby	20	3	7	10	31	32	-1	16
Ku-Ring-Gai Association	20	2	3	15	16	57	-41	9
Southern Branch	19	1	4	14	11	43	-32	7
Central Coast Assoc	20	0	6	14	9	59	-50	6

attack METROPOLITAN LEAGUE GRADE 12 FINAL SERIES: ROUND 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown Association	19	15	3	1	58	9	49	48
Southern Districts	20	14	3	3	54	15	39	45
Granville	20	13	3	4	49	22	27	42
Illawarra	20	12	3	5	38	18	20	39
Manly Warringah	20	12	2	6	40	23	17	38
Nepean Association	20	11	4	5	37	38	-1	37
St George Assoc	20	9	5	6	24	21	3	32
Gladesville Hornsby	20	7	6	7	26	29	-3	27
Canterbury	20	7	3	10	16	19	-3	24
Macarthur	20	6	6	8	22	28	-6	24
Sutherland Association	20	7	1	12	22	38	-16	22
Ku-Ring-Gai Association	20	5	2	13	19	39	-20	17
Central Coast Assoc	20	4	4	12	18	40	-22	16
Bankstown Assoc	20	3	5	12	16	40	-24	14
Eastern Suburbs	20	3	4	13	14	45	-31	13
Southern Branch	19	1	6	12	6	35	-29	9

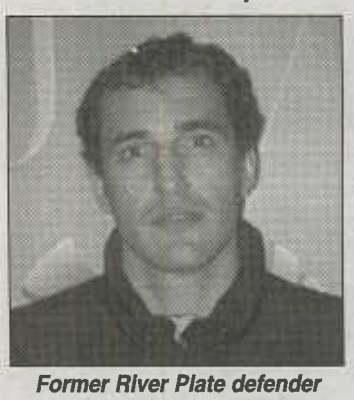
JETS DIVE INTO TRANSFER MARKET

Newcastle United Jets made a flurry of new signings prior to the commencement of the Preseason Cup.

Newcastle manager Richard Money handed a deal to former River Plate full-back Mateo Corbo after the player impressed in trials.

Corbo, 29, has signed a one-year contract and brings with him a wealth of experience, which has included stints at River Plate, Real Oviedo and Barnsley.

He becomes one of the very first South American stars that has signed in the new A-League and the Jets management has stated he will certainly bring in a lot of entertainment.



Former River Plate defender Mateo Corbo has signed with the Newcastle Jets

Newcastle also signed two temporary replacements. Tarek Elrich, younger brother of Fulham winger Ahmed Elrich, will replace Jobe Wheelhouse (ankle), whilst Sydney United defender Alan Picken replaces Andrew Durante (broken leg).

Picken has signed a six-month loan deal while Elrich has been given a three-year deal contrary to reports that he was on a three-month spell.

Speaking on Durante's progress, the talented defender had his cast taken off last Thursday and is said to be on the road to recovery.

After being on the receiving end of a malicious Nick Mrdja tackle three months ago, Durante stated to *ABSW* that he was happy with his progress.

"I can't believe how time has flown, it feels like only yesterday I did it, now I have the cast off and have started doing small things in moving my leg once more.

"Soon I will be hitting light weights and then hit the playing-field with the boys."

Durante has given himself a target of getting back onto the pitch for Round 7 or 8 in the A-League, but will remain cautious with a quick comeback.

"I'd be over the moon if I could get back to playing football around then but I don't want to rush myself to soon.

"Ideally, it looks like I'll make a return around rounds 10 or 11, but will see how things go."

Injured defender Andrew Durante is on the mend and could be back in the early rounds of the A-League

Ethnic support vital for A-League

Melbourne Victory striker Archie Thompson says the only obstacle preventing the new A-League competition from succeeding is whether clubs can gain the support of ethnic groups that used to follow previous national league teams.

The A-League kicks off in August and the playing strips of the eight clubs were unveiled in Sydney.

Unlike previous competitions in Australia, the A-League will only feature one team from each of the major cities.

Thompson said he hoped fans of the Melbourne clubs who had previously played in the national league would get behind the Victory this season.

"It is going to be tough to grab people from their clubs that they have grown up with, and have ethnic background with their club," he said.

"It's going to be hard to do that but everything's great, they are working great behind the scenes at the Victory."

The city of Melbourne has had a number of club representatives during the old National League days which brought in their own selection of healthy crowds.

South Melbourne (Greek Origin), Heidelberg United (Greek Origin), Melbourne Knights (Croatian Origin), Brunswick Juventus (Italian Origin), Preston Lions (Macedonian Origin) and Sunshine Georgies (Maltese Origin) all took part in bringing a wealth of supporters to their matches.

The majority of these sides have now filtered through to the Victorian Premier League where they've managed to keep their devoted and passionate fans from previous years.

Melbourne Victory's aim is to hopefully unite all these ethnic groups as one during the A-League season in August, a task that will no doubt be tough but not impossible.

The Victory are not the only side that will be hoping for an ethnic supporters base as Sydney FC has also fallen into the same scenario as their neighbours in reuniting every nationality as one.

Although there has been calls from various supporters groups that they will not be supporting the new A-League for various reasons, the game of football is at stake.

Wit a disappointing opening round of crowd figures that ventured off to the pre-season competition, a vast improvement in gate sales is needed for the development of the new league.

West Ham's Hutchison wants A-League move

More international stars are said to be on their ways to the A-League.

Released West Ham United midfielder Don Hutchison wants a move to the new A-League.

The Scotland international has pulled out of trials at Millwall in the last week to seek a move Down Under.

Hutchison, 34, has shaken off last season's injury problems and wants to relaunch his career in Australia, having been attracted to the competition with some of the ex-Premiership stars now featuring.

A former Liverpool favourite, Hutchison is well aware of Steve McMahon's presence as coach of Perth Glory and also Richard Money now being in charge of Newcastle Jets. Former Manchester United star Dwight Yorke has already become a cult hit in Sydney while McMahon has attracted Brian Deane, fresh from helping Sunderland win Premiership promotion, to Perth.

The A-League's restrictive 20-man roster limit will prove difficult for Hutchison's agents to negotiate. But A-League chiefs would be crazy to reject a player of Hutchison's experience for the coming season.

Teddy Sheringham, Martin Keown, Steve McManaman and Dennis Wise have already been targeted names that could be part of certain A-League sides next season.

Their arrivals all depend on how the league will go this year, a positive one will see many of them flood the A-League, something fans will certainly cheer about.

We could possibly get an upgrade on the player rosters with a new rule that could see team's have as many as 22 players in their side as opposed to 20.

Former West Ham star and Scottish international Don Hutchinson is looking for an A-League side

Hatzis completes Adelaide United squad

Adelaide United FC this week confirmed its 20th and final squad member, with the signing of promising 18-year old midfielder Tony Hatzis.

The signing of Tony fulfilled the required quota of 3 Under 20 Players – Robert Cornthwaite and Michael Matricciani are the other 2.

Tony is one of Adelaide's most aspiring youngsters has been playing with current Premier League Champion team Metro Stars.

In 2003 and 2004 Tony played SA Premier League football with Enfield City, and played his junior soccer with Adelaide City and Adelaide Galaxy.

Tony was part of the SA Sports Institute football program in 2001 and 2002, and was a member of the 'Team SA' team that participated in the 2005 International Soccer Challenge (the team was coached by John Kosmina).

Tony will wear the number 16 Shirt for AUFC, and is excited at the opportunity of being a part of John Kosmina's team, and is looking forward to the challenge.

"I really cannot wait to kick start my career with Adelaide United who have given me this great opportunity", Hatzis stated.

SYDNEY FC KEEPING PACE WITH ITS GROWTH AGENDA

Sydney FC has implemented a significant up scaling of its management and administration capabilities with the appointment of Mr. Tim Parker to the position of Executive General Manager, reporting directly to the Board of Directors, effective immediately.

With qualification to the World Club Championship in December secured, and the commencement of the Hyundai A-League imminent, the appointment is in line with the demands associated with the commercialisation and globalisation of the Sydney FC brand franchise.

The completion of the Club's capital raising has seen it close its shareholder register with two European based investors and one US based investor.

Additionally, the signings of Dwight Yorke, Pierre Littbarski and Alejandro Salazar and the Club's participation in the UAE tour, the Oceania WCC Tournament and its impending participation at the WCC in Japan, has meant that the profile of the Sydney FC brand internationally has attracted significant interest and profile, and has necessitated a strengthening in its organisational capability, particularly in the leadership of its brand equity commercialisation.

Mr. Parker joins Sydney FC after seven years as Managing Director of the Australian arm of global advertising agency giant FCB, and will have overall management and administrative responsibility for the day to day running of Sydney FC.

In making this appointment, Mr. Andy Harper, Sydney FC's CEO during the successful launch phase of the Club, will take on the newly created role of Director of Football Development.

In this role, Mr. Harper will have direct responsibility for the development and implementation of a comprehensive Community Football Program linking Sydney FC to the grass roots of the game, liaison with the various national and state bodies, the design and development of the Club's future facilities, and its growth both in terms of youth infrastructure and globalisation via alliances with major International Clubs.

Additionally, Sydney FC is also proud to announce the appointment of Mr David Eland to the role of General Manager – Commercial and Marketing, after 13 years at Cricket NSW.

Mr Peter Semos has also been announced as the Manager - Memberships and Ticketing.

Meanwhile on the players front, former Australia youth international Joey Schirripa has been training with Sydney FC.

The left-sided winger has recovered from long-term injury and Sydney coach Pierre Littbarski has taken advantage by having a look at the former NSL Young Player of the Year.

Joey played the latter part of this season with NSW Premier League outfit Central Coast United. Asked to go on trials with the club earlier in the year, Schirripa could well be used as a stand-by player if injuries hit the Sydney FC squad.

Tim Parker: Sydney FC's new executive manager

A-League players show colours

The countdown to the inaugural A-League football season is continuing, with the unveiling of the playing strips of all eight teams in Sydney last Tuesday at Rebel Sports Bondi Junction.

Players from the seven Australian teams, and Noah Hickey of the New Zealand Knights, modelled the playing gear a little over a month from the start of Australia's newest football competition.

Clubs are currently playing in alternative strips in the Pre-Season Cup, which began at the weekend.

Already, the kits have been well received by many of the players, officials and fans who have stated their desires in buying one this season.

No doubt the number 19 Sydney FC kit of Dwight Yorke will be the most popular on show.

Socceroos legend Robbie Slater was on hand to introduce a player from each of the eight Hyundai A-League clubs to model the new performanceuniforms that have been described as 'sleek, stylish and fast.'

The participating players included:

* Michael Baird - Queensland Roar
* Travis Dodd - Adelaide United
* Andre Gumprecht - Central Coast
* Noah Hickey - New Zealand Knights
* Jade North - Newcastle United Jets
* Mark Rudan - Sydney FC
* David Tarka - Perth Glory
* Archie Thompson - Melb Victory

"We're excited to provide the Hyundai A-League clubs with high quality product as worn by some of the world's best teams including Liverpool Football Club, Manchester City and Bolton Wanderers," said Vanessa Knight, General Manager Marketing, Reebok.

"We worked closely with the clubs on the design and manufacture, using technical fabrications to ensure the athletes can compete at the best of their ability."

"Like Reebok's partnerships with other global leagues such as the NFL and NBA, we're excited to be the only brand that hangs in every locker of the new national football competition."

Also at the event was Football Federation Australia's, Head of Operations Matt Carroll, who believes that "having a world-class partner on board such as Reebok to manufacture the uniforms has ensured quality strips right across the league."

Inspired by each individual club, each team uniform is dominated by one proprietary colour and highlighted with an additional two colours to reinforce the apparel's performance-based look of speed, fit and ultimate comfort.

Each kit features 100% polyester PlayDry Pique Knit. Playdry technology is a moisture management system, particularly effective for athletes, since it helps keep them cooler, drier and more comfortable, by moving moisture away from the skin to the outer layer of the fabric for quick evaporation.

PLAYDRY fabrics are specially engineered in structure and content to allow performance to be built into the materials used to make PLAYDRYproducts.

The complete apparel range for each team includes a complete on-field, off-field and supporter range for Men, Women and Kids. Hyundai A-League apparel will be available nationwide at Rebel Sport, Rowe & Jarman, Jim Kidd, Hyundai A-League Clubs, along with independent sports and specialist retailers.

The A-League season kicks-off on August 26.

GET YOUR KITS ON: (L-R) – Queensland Roars Michael Baird, New Zealand Knights' Noah Hickey, Adelaide United's Travis Dodd, Central Coast Mariners Andre Gumprecht, Melbourne Victory's Archie Thompson, Perth Glory's David Tarka, Newcastle Jets' Jade North and Sydney FC's Mark Rudan model the new kits

Jets crowd the only worry

The Newcastle Jets will be asked to lift their off-field game after a poor crowd for their opening match marred an otherwise solid start to the fledgling A-League's pre-season competition.

The Jets drew less than 2,000 people to EnergyAustralia Stadium for their pre-season opener against Melbourne Victory.

Neighbours Central Coast Mariners drew more than double that, Adelaide United managed a respectable 5,000-plus while Sydney FC attracted 8,714 for glamour striker Dwight Yorke's first Australian hitout.

Football Federation Australia (FFA) head of operations Matt Carroll said he was pleased with how the weekend went overall, though he admitted Newcastle's crowd - officially listed at 1,864 - was a concern.

But Carroll said he was confident the teething problems would be solved, particularly with the FFA set to ramp-up its A-League promotion and publicity starting with the season launch in Sydney on August 8.

Jade North shows off the new Newcastle Jets strip

"Newcastle's crowd was fairly poor. There's still some work to do there and some things for the Newcastle Jets to attend to in terms of match presentation," he said.

"We knew there would be work to be done. When you start something, you need test events."

"We will work very closely with Newcastle to see if we can help them get up to scratch."

Newcastle is not scheduled to host another home game until the inaugural match of the A-League season on August 26, unless it can make and host a final of the pre-season competition.

Newcastle chief executive George Liolio said the Jets had decided not to give away tickets to artificially inflate the crowd and wanted to keep its "powder dry" for the official season opener against Adelaide United.

Several thousand tickets for the Sydney FC match at the weekend were given away in a newspaper promotion.

"We believe we're tracking fairly well," Liolio said.

"As far as the crowd was concerned, it wasn't that much of a surprise to tell you the truth."

"Our decision was to use the match as a dry run for the stadium and keep our powder dry for the 26th of August."

It's a tactic the FFA itself has been using - deliberately trying to distance the A-League from both the Club World Championship qualifiers held in May and the current pre-season tournament.

It will kickstart a multi-million dollar campaign after the August 8 launch to promote the A-League.

The Jets will be tackling a tough obstacle in the Rugby League as the Newcastle Knights hold a big population of supporters for the code.

Stars such as Ned Zelic, Richard Johnson, Jade North, Nick Carle and Ante Milicic have been lured to the Jets in a bid to help promote the club's gate tickets.

Meanwhile, After close to a nine month wait, the eight clubs of the Hyundai A-League finally got to reveal their playing strips for the 2005-06 season at a shopping centre in Sydney's Bondi Junction.

The Jets were supported by Socceroo Jade North who sported the new look kit.

So far the strip appears to be well received by players and club officials. "I like it – it's something a bit different" Jets captain Ned Zelic told the Newcastle Herald.

Liolio said the Jets wanted to retain red and blue but also add something special that set the club apart. "Newcastle has a very strong association with the colours red and blue" he also told the *Newcastle Herald*.

"We looked at playing strips from around the world and Barcelona (away colours) was one which stood out. We then worked with the supplier Reebok. Reebok supply uniforms for American (gridiron) teams so we were able to use the gold from New Orleans Saints, red from San Francisco 49ers and the blue from St Louis".

Arrive alive
NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE

Arrive alive NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE

Stallions and Koalas win ahead of their top of the table tussle

Cavanagh and Calvi on target again for top two

A Marconi player is pictured trying to keep a Sutherland opponent at bay

Competition front runners Marconi and North West Sydney Koalas both overcame determined opponent's prior to their arrive alive NSW womens Super League top of the table tussle next weekend.

A poor second half performance by Marconi didn't stop them from remaining undefeated and chalking up another clean sheet, as Alicia Cavanagh secured a 2-0 win for the runaway league leader.

They remained ten points clear of NWS, who host the Stallions at Morrison Bay next Sunday.

An 88th minute Danielle Calvi goal gave NWS a 1-0 away win over fourth-placed Macarthur at Lynwood Park and avenged the loss they suffered to the Rams back in round two.

The Koalas have since put together a 17 match unbeaten run, with their only other loss coming back in the very first round, when they were thrashed 7-0 by Marconi.

The Stallions have won all 19 of their fixtures, scoring 11 7goals and conceding just six.

A bright and sometimes sparkling first half at Marconi Stadium last Sunday, ended with Marconi up 2-0, courtesy of a double from striker Cavanagh.

She opened the scoring on 20 minutes following clever one touch football out of defence. A final pass to Anne Starr saw her first cross blocked, but her second was met by the rising Cavanagh in front of goal, and her powerful header left the 'keeper stranded.

Both Cavanagh and Fab Perfilio's pace up front caused endless problems for the Sutherland defence. Six minutes later, Cavanagh slotted her second. The first half saw the Stallions create several more chances, but poor crossing and finishing let them down.

The second half though, saw Sutherland frustrate the Stallions attack, putting nine players behind the ball. Even so, Marconi still squandered several chances to put the game beyond any doubt. Hard working Rebecca O'Neill in midfield created several opportunities, whilst stalwart Lisa Warrener shored up a strong backline, snuffing out opposition attacks and setting up several counters.

Coach Steve Marsh was happy with the way the Stallions played overall, but was concerned the team did not adjust their attacking style when confronted with a changed opposition defensive plan.

"We are a smart team but today in the second half we failed to adjust to a gritty defensive change by Sutherland," Marsh said.

Third placed Manly United FC pulled five points clear of Macarthur with a 2-0 away victory over Penrith at Cook Park.

Prolific scorer Sarah Gregorius got the first goal in the 20th minute and Martine Edwards doubled United's lead three minutes before the break.

Sutherland dropped two spots from fifth to seventh, while Southern Branch and University of NSW moved up a place to fifth and six respectively after each recorded a win.

Kate French scored a hat-trick as Southern Branch enjoyed a 6-1 home win over St George Saints at South Nowra.

University of NSW showed no mercy to the winless Northern Tigers, beating the bottom of the table team 6-0 at David Phillips Field.

Bathurst City moved level on points with Sydney University, after notching a 2-1 away win over that team at Hensley Athletic Field. Central Coast also enjoyed success on the road, with a 3-1 triumph over Gladesville Ravens at Peel Park.

Hair we go: A Sutherland player flies high to head the ball

Arrive alive NSW Womens Super League Round: 21

Date	Home Team	Away Team	Venue	Time
07-08-05	Sutherland Association	Southern Branch	Harrie Dening Centre	15:00
07-08-05	North West Sydney Koalas	Marconi Stallions	Morrison Bay 5	15:00
07-08-05	Manly United FC	Macarthur Rams	Cromer Park	15:00
07-08-05	St George Saints	Penrith Nepean United	St George Stadium	15:00
07-08-05	Central Coast United	Blacktown Association	Pluim Park	15:00
07-08-05	Gladesville Ravens	Bathurst City Panthers	Peel Park	15:00
07-08-05	Northern Tigers	Sydney University	Parklands Oval	15:00
07-08-05	BYE	UNSW		

Arrive alive
NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 20

FIRST GRADE: Macarthur Rams 0 NWS Koalas 1 (D Calvi 88m), Marconi Stallions 2 (A Cavanagh 20/26m) Sutherland Association 0, Penrith Nepean United 0 Manly United FC 2 (S Gregorius 20m M Edwards 42m), Southern Branch 6 (K French 21/48/80m K Field 50m E Halloway 55m T Siskoska 73m) St George Saints 1 (C Snedden 15m), Gladesville Ravens 1 (F Agar 26m) Central Coast United FC 3 (N Mackie 33m J Northcote 47m R Hartley 69m), Sydney University 1 (A Fudeh 5m) Bathurst City 2 (K Matthews 36m R Holiday 68m), UNSW Soccer Club 6 (A Smith 27m H Trimble 49m E Bedford 55/82m K Mitrevski 62m F Choucair 85m) Northern Tigers 0.

GRADE 21: Macarthur Rams 0 NWS Koalas 1, Marconi Stallions 2 Sutherland Association 1, Penrith Nepean United 0 Manly United FC 1, Southern Branch 0 St George Saints 0, Gladesville Ravens 2 Central Coast United FC 4, Sydney University 0 Bathurst City 2, UNWS Soccer Club 1 Northern Tigers 1.

RESCHEDULED GAMES: ROUND 16:

FIRST GRADE: Manly United FC 2 (L Taylor 33m C Murphy 89m) Southern Branch 2 (E Halloway 7/43m).

GRADE 21: Manly United FC 2 Southern Branch 1.

Arrive alive
NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 20 FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	B	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	**20**	**19**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**117**	**6**	**111**	**60**
NW Sydney Koalas	20	15	2	2	1	59	17	42	50
Manly United FC	20	12	4	3	1	60	25	35	43
Macarthur Rams	20	11	2	6	1	44	21	23	38
Southern Branch	20	10	2	7	1	51	29	22	35
UNSW	20	10	1	8	1	42	30	12	34
Sutherland Assoc	20	8	6	5	1	66	29	37	33
Central Coast Utd	20	9	1	9	1	42	26	16	31
Sydney University	20	7	2	9	2	38	28	10	29
Bathurst City	20	7	2	9	2	44	36	8	29
Penrith Nepean Utd	20	7	3	9	1	37	32	5	27
Gladesville Ravens	20	5	0	13	2	33	73	-40	21
St George Saints	20	4	3	12	1	37	57	-20	18
Blacktown Assoc	19	1	0	16	2	19	107	-88	9
Northern Tigers	19	0	0	17	2	12	125	-113	6

B denotes a Bye scoring 3 points and 3 Goal.

Arrive alive
NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 20 GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	B	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	**20**	**16**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**67**	**11**	**56**	**53**
Manly United FC	20	15	2	2	1	60	13	47	50
Sutherland Assoc	20	15	0	4	1	54	22	32	48
NW Sydney Koalas	20	11	0	8	1	45	20	25	36
Bathurst City	20	9	3	6	2	45	26	17	36
Macarthur Rams	20	9	5	5	1	30	20	10	35
Penrith Nepean Utd	20	10	1	8	1	54	27	27	34
Southern Branch	20	9	4	6	1	36	28	8	34
St George Saints	20	5	5	9	1	31	33	-2	23
UNSW	20	4	8	7	1	27	32	-5	23
Blacktown Assoc	20	3	4	11	2	24	45	-21	19
Central Coast Utd	20	4	4	11	1	27	53	-26	19
Northern Tigers	20	2	5	11	2	24	53	-29	17
Sydney University	20	2	4	12	2	21	39	-18	16
Gladesville Ravens	20	2	1	15	2	23	84	-61	13

B denotes a Bye scoring 3 points and 3 Goal.

FINDING THE NEXT BOSNICH AND KEWELL

SOCCER NSW TACKLES DECLINE IN STANDARD OF YOUNGSTERS

New Elite Development Program announced

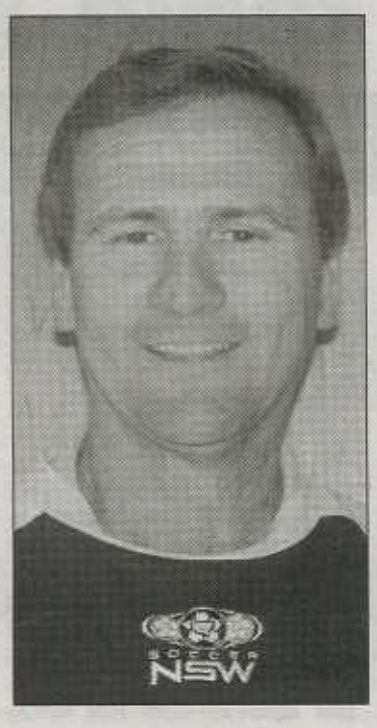
After the World Youth championships in Finland, FIFA reported that Australia were technically poor. Since then I have had many conversations with my colleagues who all seem to be saying similar things about our elite players.

Comments such as 'the standard of the Youth league and the National Talent Identification series has dropped' and 'we aren't producing technically gifted players or players who are comfortable on the ball". These comments are repeated over and over again by coaches and players, who have either coached or played at decent levels and are well qualified to make such judgements.

Soccer NSW Coaching and Development Department are committed to two main areas; these being 1: Coach Education and 2: Elite Player Development.

Whilst a program for the provision of Coach Education courses and Coaching services to Grass Roots Clubs and Associations has already been initiated, it seems we have failed in our attempts to "get it right" with regard to Elite Player Development.

Starting some 15 years ago with NSW Coaching Director, David Lee, who initiated the NSWSF Academy



Norm Boardman

and the zone program whereby players were trained in their own zones and played each other regularly.

Then there was the E.S.P. program, where players were coached at their clubs, and of course, the ill-fated R.E.P. program which was plagued by problems with lack of grounds, facilities, coaches, poor communication and lack of support from the clubs.

Without doubt 1990 to 1995 was a successful era in the technical development of the youth in NSW, with many of these players currently plying their trade overseas. What has happened since then?

My view is that somewhere along the way we last focus.

On reflection, every system had some flaws and I don't think anyone can come up with a solution that suits everyone. We will always encounter problems with travel, time, club's, state etc.

What Soccer NSW proposes to do is provide a development system for our youth that is aimed purely at helping each and every player to fulfill their potential.

The new system to be named "Elite Development Program" will be centralised at Valentine Sports Park (VSP), with both male and female players being catered for. Four squads of around 20 players in each will be formed, those being 11/12 year boys and girls and 13/14 year boys and girls.

The program will have two stages, Nov-Dec 2005 and late Jan-30th Sept 2006. The 11/12 and 13/14 girls and 11/12 boys will attend approximately three sessions per week during the off season (Nov- Dec) whilst the 13/14 boys will attend approximately four sessions a week.

The players will return in late January 2006 when they will continue training as follows:11/12 boys and girls in the in season, three sessions Jan-Sept, 13/14 boys and girls in the in season, four sessions Jan-Sept

The 11/12 girls will attend two to three sessions every second week and play with their club on Sunday

The 13/14 girls will attend two to three sessions per week and play with their club on Sunday

The 11/12 boys will attend three sessions per week including a midweek game

The 13/14 boys will attend four sessions per week including a midweek game

The program will be "tapered" to allow for such commitments as PSSA and CHS and players will have at least one week break from the program during every school holiday.

We will be seeking support from the clubs to assist us in providing the appropriate level of competition in the form of midweek matches at V.S.P.

Ideally midweek games would be against Premier Youth League U13 for our U12's, and U15, for our U14's squads.

I see no reason why the clubs wouldn't support the concept, but if they don't then we will have to look at alternatives.

The players will not only be doing technical sessions, they will learn about speed and agility, be lectured in time management, sports psychology, injury prevention and treatment, as well as advice on strength and conditioning.

To assist with travel, we are considering conducting two sessions on Saturdays, so parents won't have to drive out during the week in the traffic.

This is only one of the ways in which we are trying to make this system more user friendly.

Trials for these squads will be conducted on the following dates and times:

1994 and 1995 born Boys @ VSP Saturday 17th Sept 10am

1993 and 1992 born Boys @ VSP Monday 19th Sept 7pm

1994 and 1995 born Girls @ VSP Sunday 18th Sept 10am

1993 and 1992 born Girls @ VSP Sunday 18th Sept 10am

The cost of the Elite Development Program is $300 plus GST

To register for a trial you must email the following details:

NAME: ..... DATE OF BIRTH: .....
CURRENT CLUB: ..... CONTACT NUMBERS: .....

to tricia@soccernsw.com.au by NO LATER THAN FRIDAY 1st SEPTEMBER.

For more information contact Soccer NSW Coaching and Development Department on 8814 4400.

New Indoor Soccer comps starting in September 2005

- BOYS U/6's — U/18's
- GIRLS U/12's — U/16's
- MENS COMPS
- LADIES COMPS
- MIXED COMPS
- 30+ COMPS

Registration / sign-up days in August 2005

Actual dates and times to be advised around mid-August

For further information (fee, requirements etc.), contact Bonnyrigg Indoor Sports Centre: 9610 0708 or 9610 0699

BONNYRIGG INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE
Cnr Edensor Rd & Smithfield Rd,
Bonnyrigg Ph: (02) 9610 0708
Email: nswsoccer@optusnet.com.au

SOCCER NSW FUTSAL

2005 State Robertson and Amateur Cup Finals

The 2005 State, Robertson and Amateur Cup Final was held at Ray Marshall Reserve, Eire Street, South Granville on Sunday 24th July and was hosted this year by Granville District Soccer Football Association.

Soccer NSW would like to acknowledge the continued support and sponsorship of the Robertson Family and congratulate the following winners:

STATE CUPS -
12 Boys - Liverpool City Robins
14 Boys - AC United
16 Boys - Ingleburn RSL
18 Boys - Como West Jannali
Over 35 Men - Cronulla RSL
12 Girls - Hurlstone Park Wanderers
14 Girls - Hurlstone Park Wanderers
16 Girls - Carlingford Redbacks
All Age Women - University of Wollongong
ROBERTSON CUP - Grade 21 Men - St Johns Auburn
AMATEUR CUP - All Age Men - Kissing Point

We would also like to congratulate all participants on their achievements in the 2005 State Robertson and Amateur Cup.

Roo spots available for new stars

Socceroos hopefuls preparing for the inaugural A-League do not believe having a European-based coach will hinder their efforts in trying to break into the Australian side.

With the new-look competition enticing several current and former Socceroos back to Australia, the likes of former national youth player

Michael Baird says attracting the attention of Dutch supercoach Guus Hiddink should not be a problem.

His team, the Queensland Roar, will sport Dutch-like bright orange shirts when the season kicks off on August 26.

"There's always that fear (that local players will be overlooked), but you can see by the people who run the FFA now that they're going to feed in the information," Baird said at the unveiling of the eight A-League clubs' playing strips at Bondi Junction.

The former Brisbane Strikers, South Melbourne and Sydney Olympic striker was picked in the Australian team for the Youth World Cup in 2003, but with the demise of the National Soccer League in 2004, has most recently been playing in the NSW State League with Bonnyrigg.

"It's been a long time to get a new league running, you're not going to get in the Australian team by playing state league down in Sydney," he said.

"But now that this league's going, hopefully (Hiddink) does watch the games because there is a lot of talent out there."

Current Socceroos squad member Jade North, who last played for Australia against Indonesia in March, admitted Hiddink's location did give European-based players a head start, but said strong performances in the A-League should still make an impression.

"First things first, though, you've got to perform to at least get yourself in that position," the Newcastle Jets defender said.

Perth Glory defender David Tarka, who last wore Australian colours in an international in June 2004, said the inclusion of current Socceroos in the A-League meant those playing around them would also have a chance to impress.

"He can't overlook the A-League, a lot of players have come back so he has to look at those players," Tarka said.

Injured Sydney FC captain and former Australian under-20 Mark Rudan said with the A-League completely professional, local players could feel they are on the same footing as those in Europe.

"Playing in Europe doesn't necessarily mean you've got one over the players here because it's a professional competition now right across the board," Rudan said.

"I see no reason why Guus shouldn't cast his eyes over the players here."

"There's some great talent here and it shows. Archie Thompson, David Zdrilic and Kevin Muscat are all current Socceroos, they've come back here and they're putting their hand up for selection as well."

Perth Glory's David Tarka will be pushing for Socceroo selection

A-League stars Archie Thompson (Melbourne Victory) and Sydney FC's Mark Rudan (right) discuss their opening round clash next month

McMahon re-living Glory days

Former Liverpool midfielder Steve McMahon insists coaching Perth Glory in the new Australia A-League will be like playing a European Cup-tie every other weekend.

The three-hour time zone difference between Western Australia and the east coast - and the six hours' difference with New Zealand - means Perth will be accumulating plenty of frequent flyer points in the inaugural A-League season.

"The players are keen to learn about the European professional way of life and I can do that for them," McMahon told PA International.

Glory were already a big success before McMahon's arrival earlier this year.

He believes, with the signing of players with European experience, such as Brian Deane, goalkeeper Jason Petkovic and former Nottingham Forest apprentice David Tarker, that success can continue under him.

"Some critics have questioned my signing of Brian but he has good presence, is big and strong and still fit for a player of 37," said McMahon.

"He is going to be a great asset at this level," McMahon said of the former Leeds United and Sunderland striker, who will join the squad in early August.

Perth Glory Gaffer Steve McMahon in full voice

McMahon said it was fantastic that Tarker was coming back.

"We sold him for about ($)150,000 to Forest but he was plagued by injuries there," he said.

"As a centre-back he will become the team's spine. I have high hopes for him."

McMahon's catch-phrase when asked to describe the standard of football fans can expect at the domestic elite level is: "It can only get better."

But he concedes the dream that one day the round-ball game can rub shoulders in Australia with the likes of Australian Rules football, rugby union and rugby league is dependent on one thing - qualifying for the World Cup.

"We have between 12,000 and 16,000 loyal supporters at Glory. It's a great fan base but they all want to qualify for the World Cup finals," McMahon said.

"The national team has to do well, has to qualify, for the A-League to succeed."

While the football is going to be a challenge, McMahon loves the lifestyle Down Under.

"Perth is a fantastic place to live in terms of quality of lifestyle," he said.

"The climate is wonderful and the football is okay - it can only get better."

Allsopp glad to be home

Danny Allsopp will never forget the seven years he spent in English football with Manchester City, Notts County and Hull City.

But the 26-year-old striker is happy to be home and playing a key role in Australia's new A-League with Melbourne Victory.

Allsopp, who turns 27 on August 10, helped to steer Hull City to promotion from Coca Cola League One last season.

But he admitted on Sunday that the attraction of returning to Australia with his wife Vanessa and young son Ethan to be one of the stars of the fledgling A-League competition was to good a chance to resist.

"After seven years of living away from home I'd had enough," Allsopp told PA International.

"Vanessa is pregnant and expecting our second child on New Year's Day so it is all working out well, with family and friends here in Melbourne."

But probably the biggest influence, football-wise, was the chance to team up again with Victory boss Ernie Merrick.

The Scottish-born coach first spotted Allsopp playing non-league football for Monbulk and Croydon City in Melbourne's outer suburbs and encouraged the teenager to join the Victorian Institute of Sport.

"Ernie's probably the best coach I have ever had. I would probably still be in England if he had not been appointed Victory's coach," said Allsopp, who played in Friday's pre-season cup competition's 1-1 draw at Newcastle Jets.

Merrick's refreshing attitude to how the game should be played helped to convince Allsopp that the time was right to return.

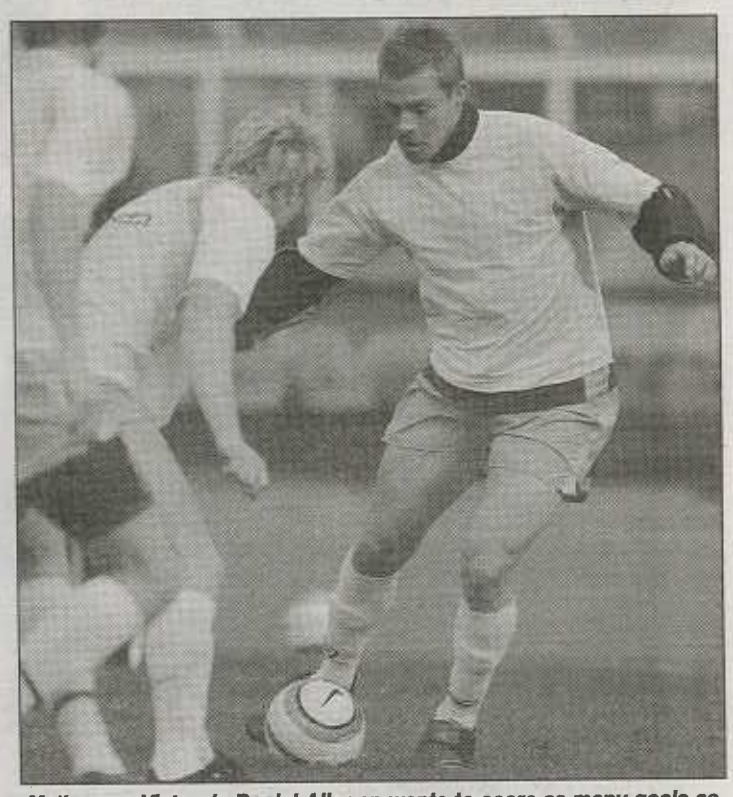
"I don't believe in boring, defensive football," said Merrick, whose prized recruits include former Millwall and Glasgow Rangers defender Kevin Muscat and former Lierse (Belgium) striker Archie Thompson, who still holds the world record for the most number of goals in a World Cup qualifier (13 against America Samoa).

"I favour playing high-intensity, high pressure games that the crowd enjoys," Merrick added. "We'll be trying to play all our games that way."

"We'll play a minimum of three strikers. We'll win games, we won't draw many, we may lose some. It's risky but, in my mind, it's the only way to play."

And Allsopp supports the all-out attacking policy completely.

"It's definitely a different style of play. We pass the ball a lot more," he said. "I'm still finding my feet but already the signs are encouraging in my partnership with Archie."



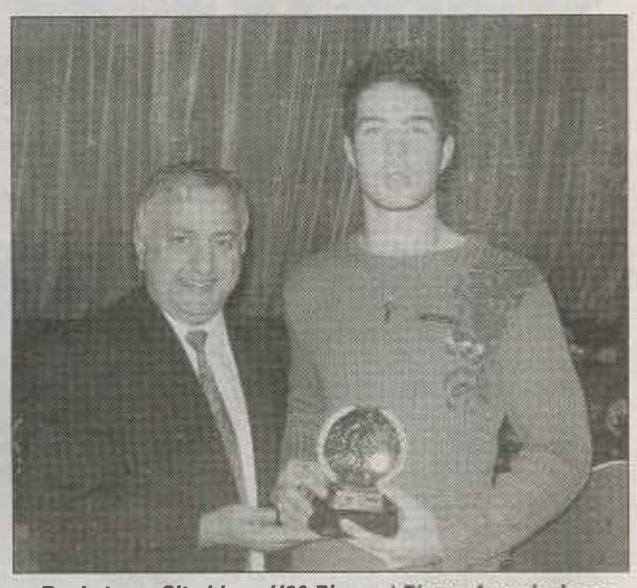
Melbourne Victory's Daniel Allsopp wants to score as many goals as possible for his side in the A-League this season

Bankstown celebrates Grand Final win again

Special Feature by Joe Russo

Bankstown City Lions U20 Most Improved award winner Jonathan Jackson being presented his trophy with Federal MP Daryl Melham

Soccer NSW President Tom Doumanis presents Shane Webb with the Best and Fairest award



Bankstown City Lions U20 Players' Player Award winner Ivan Kovacevic being presented his trophy with Federal MP Daryl Melham

Soccer NSW President Tom Doumanis presents Steve Liavas with the Most Improved award

Back-to-back NSW Premier League Grand Final winners Bankstown City Lions celebrated their successful season with an Annual Awards Presentation Night at the Vaudeville Function Centre in Revesby.

Superbly hosted by Louie Apostolovski, the club secretary and media manager, it was night that recognised the achievements of the club's Under 20 and First Grade teams.

The Under 20 side, coached by John Caruana, had the following awards:

Most Improved -
Jonathan Jackson

Best & Fairest -
Paul Medulla

Players' Player -
Ivan Kovacevic

The First Grade team, superbly coached by Peter Tsekenis, who took over after Round 4 after coach Andy Papoulias returned to his native Cyprus, defeated the Bonnyrigg White Eagles in a superb Grand Final at Parramatta Stadium.

The awards for the First Grade team were as follows:

Most Improved -
Steve Liavas

Best & Fairest -
Shane Webb

Players' Player -
Peter Tsekenis

Joining Federal, State and Local politicians as guests of honour was Soccer NSW President Tom Doumanis. Mr Doumanis congratulated the club on its fine achievements and kindly donated a match ball from the Grand Final which was auctioned on the night and raised $1800.

Bankstown City Lions acknowledged all their sponsors and the media representatives that were present, including *ABSW*, with gifts including a Bankstown City Lions jersey that each received signed by the entire First Grade team.

Peter Tsekenis, the team's player/coach, was voted Players' Player of the year.

***All photos thanks to the Australian Macedonian Weekly**

A lucky auction winner is presented with a signed ball from the entire championship winning Bankstown Lions squad by Lou Apostolovski (right)

Player manager Peter Tsekenis being awarded Players' Player of the year award by Soccer NSW President Tom Doumanis

Bankstown City Lions' well organized club secretary Lou Apostolovski

The media table with ABSW's own Joe Russo (bottom far right) and Sunday Night Soccer presenter Joesph Carlucci (bottom second from right)

The VIP table with Soccer NSW President Tom Doumanis (second from right) and guests

WORLD NEWS

Rijkaard commits for four

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard has committed himself to the Spanish champions for another four years.

"We have reached an agreement with the club until 2009 which I will sign after the Asian tour," Rijkaard told a news conference at the club's pre-season training camp in Denmark.

Frank Rijkaard has signed a new four-year deal with Barcelona

"The club has shown confidence in me and the coaching staff."

"Now the most important thing is to get on and enjoy the day to day work at the club."

The 42-year-old joined Barca in 2003 and after a difficult start to his first season steered them into second place behind Valencia.

Last season he led Barcelona to their first Primera Liga title in six years and the first knockout stage of the Champions League before losing to Chelsea.

Trezeguet's future in Turin

Juventus striker David Trezeguet has pledged his future to the club and claims that even Chelsea's millions could not lure him away from Turin.

The 27-year-old France forward was reportedly the subject of a 55 million euro (A$86.9million) bid from the Premiership champions earlier this northern summer but insists he is determined to add to his trophy haul with the Bianconeri after claiming a third Scudetto in five years.

Trezeguet's 2004/05 season was hampered by injuries to his shoulder and right ankle and he is eager to repay the faith shown in him by coach Fabio Capello.

"I was in the United States on holiday and did not really follow Chelsea's interest in me," Trezeguet told L'Equipe.

"If Chelsea were really ready to spend that amount of money then this is flattering."

"Chelsea have been making a lot of efforts to build up a very competitive team."

"But on the other hand I have my coach's trust (Fabio Capello), he was at the origin of my contract extension."

David Trezeguet has committed to Italian giants Juventus

"I feel very happy with Juventus and I never thought I could leave."

Trezeguet is also eager to play alongside compatriot Patrick Vieira who joined Juventus from Arsenal this off season.

He is convinced the former Gunner will be one of the greatest assets the Italian giant has ever had and could inspire them to Champions League success.

"With Pat's arrival the club is clearly showing their ambitions," Trezeguet added.

"We want to do well whether it's in Serie A or the Champions League. The year's objective is to win that competition."

"We have a very talented team and we must do all we can to reach that aim. The Champions League represents an exceptional level."

However, Trezeguet admits that he did not think that Arsenal would allow Vieira to leave for Italy.

"My first reaction was surprise," Trezeguet said.

"We phoned each other during the holiday and I really thought he would stay with Arsenal."

"But apparently he received that offer from Juventus and probably appreciated the club's ambition."

"I am delighted about his arrival, we all know his qualities. He has been Arsenal's symbol in the past few years."

"He will surely bring us something extra and I agree with Capello when he says that with Emerson he makes the best pair of central midfielders in the world."

Italian Councils anti-Saturdays

Several city councils that have teams in Italy's Serie B have made clear their opposition to plans to play Second Division matches on Saturday.

Traditionally matches are played on Sunday but Lega Calcio chiefs have decided this season to play Serie A games on Sunday but Serie B fixtures on Saturday.

Delegates from the local governments of Piacenza, Cesena, Terni (Ternana), Verona, Rimini, Modena, Cremona (Cremonese), Brescia, Treviso, Arezzo, Bergamo (Atalanta) and Bologna all attended Tuesday's meeting in Piacenza to discuss the affair.

The cities made it clear they were opposed to the projected change.

Most stadia in Italy are owned by city councils and the mayors of the cities involved have indicated a willingness to refuse use of stadium facilities if the plan goes ahead.

Messina Serie A status in doubt

Messina received a severe blow last week to its hopes of playing in Serie A this season. The Sicilian outfit face exclusion from the top flight because it has not managed to meet strict budget guidelines.

On Tuesday the club lost its appeal to the Conciliation Committee of the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI).

The next course of action for the club will to be appeal to magistrates in the Lazio region who will hear its case on today (August 2).

Messina president Pietro Franza was dismayed by the decision, saying in remarks reported by the www.gazzetta.it website: "It seems to me an absurd decision but I have not yet been informed officially."

"We presented all the necessary documents to be registered (for Serie A)."

Messina players will not be smiling with the decision of their side being relegated to the Serie B this season

Spurs announce Davids coup

Edgar Davids has become a Spurs signing

Dutch international Edgar Davids has joined Tottenham Hotspur on a free transfer from Inter Milan, the Premier League club.

The 32-year-old midfielder, who wears distinctive eye glasses on the pitch as protection for glaucoma, underwent a medical and agreed to personal terms last week.

"He is one of the most versatile midfielders, a ball-winner with great stamina and huge charisma and one of the best midfielders to come out of the Netherlands in the last 10 years," Spurs coach Martin Jol told the club's website.

"This is a player who went to Barcelona when they were middle of the league and took them close to winning the title."

"It's terrific that he is joining us. This is the player we have spoken about who will lift the team's mentality. We have a young squad with an average age of 23 and I believe Edgar will come in and lead by example."

Davids, one of the most experienced midfielders in world football, joined Inter from Juventus last July having spent time on loan at Barcelona.

His previous clubs also include Ajax Amsterdam and AC Milan.

Madrid players already jaded

Real Madrid's players have complained about the punishing schedule of their lucrative pre-season tour of the United States and Asia.

"We came to Japan to win the hearts of the people but it isn't easy to play with so much travelling, plane and bus trips, and official events," Brazilian striker Ronaldo told sports daily Marca.

"Eventually you pay for making such an effort."

France midfielder Zinedine Zidane, who picked up a groin strain in Monday's game, added: "At the end of the tour you really notice the travelling and this is the problem."

Real's players blamed a similarly punishing tour of Asia for their poor showing at the end of the 2003-4 Primera Liga season.

Then under coach Carlos Queiroz their form tailed off badly on the run-in to the end of the campaign as Rafael Benitez's Valencia scooped the league title.

The tour is expected to earn the club around $25 million, there was a negative press reaction to their performance in Beijing, and their last two games have failed to fill stadiums in the Chinese and Japanese capitals.

The Primera Liga begins on the weekend of August 27-28.

TROUSSIER TURNS DOWN NIGERIA

Philippe Troussier has turned down the Nigeria coaching position

Frenchman Philippe Troussier has turned down the chance to coach Nigeria for a second time, the BBC reported Troussier was chosen by the Nigerian Football Association (NFA) this week to take charge of their team but has rejected the job on health grounds.

"I have decided to stop negotiations with the NFA," Troussier said.

"After my last meeting with officials of the NFA, I travelled over the last three days to see my surgeon in Paris."

"We have decided to operate on my knee at the beginning of September. I will need three months of rehabilitation after the surgery."

"I will not be in a position to take up the responsibility of helping Nigeria qualify for the next World Cup."

Troussier, fired by French club Olympique Marseille at the end of last season, said he did not expect Nigeria to qualify for the tournament in Germany.

"Football is unpredictable but I think Nigeria has a less than 10 percent chance of going to Germany," he said.

Nigeria, who have reached the last three World Cups, trail Angola in qualifying Group Four with two matches remaining.

Troussier was sacked after a few months in charge of Nigeria in 1997 despite helping them qualify for the 1998 World Cup.

The 50-year-old has also coached Ivory Coast, South Africa, Burkina Faso and Japan.

WORLD NEWS

FIFA WORLD RANKINGS

(July 2005)

August rankings will be set out for next Monday as stated by the FIFA website

1	Brazil	846
2	Argentina	787
3	Netherlands	781
4	Czech Republic	778
5	Mexico	768
6	USA	765
7	France	749
8	England	744
8	Spain	744
10	Portugal	739
11	Germany	723
12	Turkey	716
13	Japan	715
14	Italy	713
15	Iran	711
15	Republic of Ireland	711
17	Sweden	710
18	Uruguay	703
19	Denmark	698
19	Greece	698
21	Korea Republic	696
22	Croatia	695
23	Costa Rica	691
24	Poland	689
25	Colombia	683
26	Egypt	671
27	Cameroon	666
28	Saudi Arabia	661
29	Nigeria	659
30	Russia	657
31	Romania	651
32	Tunisia	649
33	Ecuador	647
34	Paraguay	645
35	Morocco	643
36	Norway	639
36	Ukraine	639
38	South Africa	634
39	Honduras	631
39	Senegal	631
41	Jamaica	627
42	Switzerland	624
43	Finland	619
44	Côte d'Ivoire	618
45	Slovakia	613
46	Bulgaria	610
47	Slovenia	600
48	Israel	598
49	Serbia and Montenegro	595
50	Bahrain	592
50	Belgium	592
52	Iraq	591
53	Uzbekistan	581
53	Zimbabwe	581
55	Kuwait	578
56	China PR	577
57	Jordan	575
58	Trinidad and Tobago	573
59	Mali	571
60	AUSTRALIA	569
61	Guatemala	568
62	Belarus	566
62	Zambia	566
64	Oman	561
65	Latvia	560
66	Hungary	559
67	Togo	555
68	Angola	551
68	Venezuela	551
70	Ghana	548
71	Austria	547
72	Chile	546
73	Libya	545
73	Peru	545
75	Cuba	544
75	Qatar	544
77	Bosnia-Herzegovina	535
78	Congo DR	531
79	Kenya	526
80	Wales	525
81	Algeria	524
82	Estonia	520
83	Panama	515
84	Canada	514
85	Scotland	507
86	Albania	501
87	Haiti	500
87	United Arab Emirates	500
89	Guinea	497
90	Burkina Faso	496
91	Korea DPR	491
92	Indonesia	491
94	Lithuania	490
94	FYR Macedonia	490
96	Thailand	485
97	Syria	484
98	Gabon	476
99	Bolivia	474

Genoa farewells Serie A

Newly-promoted Genoa have been demoted from Serie A to the third division after the Italian Football League found evidence of match-fixing.

The League's disciplinary commission investigated a 250,000 euro ($301,700) payment from Genoa to their opponents Venezia before the final Serie B game of the season on June 11 and said telephone taps showed it was aimed at 'guaranteeing' the result.

Genoa's 3-2 win over already-relegated Venezia secured them promotion. Now the club who won six of the first seven Italian championships will play in Serie C1.

Club president Enrico Preziosi and general manager Stefano Capozucca were handed five-year bans on Wednesday from holding positions in the game for their roles in the affair.

Genoa said in a statment that Preziosi had resigned.

Francesco Dal Cin, managing director of Venezia who were declared bankrupt in June, was also given a five-year ban.

Martin Lejsal and Massimo Borgobello, players with Venezia last season, were given bans of five and six months.

Genoa will start their campaign with a three-point penalty imposed by the League. All the decisions can be appealed.

The demotion adds to the chaos surrounding the 2005-6 Serie A season which starts on August 28. Torino, who were promoted with Genoa, and Sicilian club Messina have been excluded from the top flight due to their financial problems.

Currently the 20-team Serie A only has 17 clubs ready to start the season.

In the space of six weeks Genoa fans have enjoyed the success of promotion, the tension of an investigation and now the misery of relegation to Serie C.

Their 10-year absence from the top flight looked to have ended with the dramatic victory over Venezia on June 11.

But the celebrations did not last long. A few days later Venezia's geneeral manager Giuseppe Pagliari was stopped by police as he drove away from the business headquarters of Genoa president and owner Preziosi.

Inside the car police found a suitcase containing 250,000 euros, a part-payment of the transfer fee for Venezia defender Ruben Maldonado, according to Pagliari.

The League's disciplinary commission said in a 16-page statement that rumours had been circulating that Genoa's promotion rivals Torino might have offered Venezia, who had little to play for, a 'bonus' to give their all against Genoa.

Genoa Club president Enrico Preziosi has been handed a five-year ban for bringing the game into disrepute

The statement said the money given was 'not only in order to refuse any bonus to win against Genoa but also to guarantee the much expected result in favour of Genoa'.

The statement said that the claim that the money was given as part of a transfer payment was 'irrelevant'.

Investigators were able to listen to telephone taps of conversations between club officials and between the players Lejsal and Borgobello.

According to the statement, the phone taps of the players included the phrases 'there is an agreement between the two clubs', 'there is money involved but it is not known who will take it' and 'the club will take it'.

$2m sponsor dumps Becks

ENGLAND captain David Beckham has been substituted after three years as the face of Vodafone.

The mobile phone giant said the footballer's contract has ended by "mutual consent".

Vodafone said the deal – believed to have been worth £1 million ($2.3 million) a year – had run out at the start of July and had not been renewed.

Beckham signed for two years with Vodafone in 2002 and the contract was later extended for another year.

The deal covered the launch of the operator's 3G services last year.

Advertising campaigns featuring the star have been used in Britain, the US, Spain and Japan.

The group said in a statement: "Following three successful years, Vodafone and David Beckham confirm that there will not be a further renewal of their sponsorship agreement."

David Beckham has lost his sponsorship deal with Vodafone

In addition to the Vodafone deal, Beckham has earned millions from endorsing products ranging from haircare product range Brylcreem to Police sunglasses and soft drink brand Pepsi.

The superstar reportedly earns more from his off-pitch deals and product endorsements than in wages from his Spanish club Real Madrid.

A spokesman for the 30-year-old also said the move was a mutual decision, adding that he is now focusing on his David Beckham Academy soccer school.

He said the majority of Beckham's sponsors, along with any new partners, will invest and support the project.

FIFA WORLD RANKINGS

(July 2005)

August rankings will be set out for next Monday as stated by the FIFA website

99	Singapore	474
101	Botswana	471
102	Sudan	468
103	Georgia	463
104	Rwanda	462
105	Turkmenistan	446
106	Vietnam	444
107	New Zealand	443
108	Malawi	434
109	Cyprus	432
110	Uganda	427
111	Malaysia	419
112	Congo	418
112	Northern Ireland	418
114	Lebanon	417
115	Moldova	416
116	Azerbaijan	415
116	El Salvador	415
118	St. Lucia	408
119	Armenia	391
120	Barbados	390
120	Hong Kong	390
122	St. Kitts and Nevis	389
123	Cape Verde Islands	379
124	Yemen	378
125	Benin	368
126	Ethiopia	362
126	Faroe Islands	362
128	Liberia	359
128	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	359
128	Swaziland	359
131	India	355
131	Palestine	355
133	Tahiti	353
134	Mozambique	351
135	Andorra	347
135	Solomon Islands	347
137	Malta	338
138	Liechtenstein	333
139	Tajikistan	329
140	Sri Lanka	327
141	Fiji	326
142	Maldives	322
143	Mauritius	316
144	Burundi	315
145	Myanmar	313
146	Lesotho	311
147	Vanuatu	305
148	Kazakhstan	299
149	Grenada	295
150	Madagascar	288
151	Surinam	280
152	Kyrgyzstan	274
153	Chinese Taipei	262
154	Antigua and Barbuda	255
155	Luxembourg	253
156	Sierra Leone	245
157	Bermuda	244
157	Nicaragua	244
159	Chad	242
160	Gambia	241
160	Namibia	241
162	San Marino	229
163	Laos	218
164	Papua New Guinea	217
165	British Virgin Islands	215
166	Netherlands Antilles	209
167	Dominica	202
168	Bangladesh	200
169	Eritrea	190
170	Pakistan	188
171	Equatorial Guinea	185
172	Dominican Republic	182
173	Tanzania	171
174	Seychelles	169
175	Niger	166
176	Mauritania	161
177	Cayman Islands	156
178	Nepal	155
178	Samoa	155
180	Belize	142
180	Central African Republic	142
180	Guyana	142
183	Mongolia	141
184	Tonga	128
185	Cambodia	114
185	New Caledonia	114
187	Philippines	95
188	Bhutan	92
188	Somalia	92
190	Macao	86
191	Guinea-Bissau	84
192	Bahamas	83
193	Cook Islands	82
194	Puerto Rico	73
195	São Tomé e Principe	68

WORLD NEWS

RONALDINHO RELAXED ABOUT TALKS

Barcelona forward Ronaldinho insists he is happy at the club despite rising concern at the Nou Camp over his failure to sign a new deal.

The 25-year-old Brazilian star's contract expires in 2008 but Barca want to tie him down until 2010 fearing that another team could entice him away.

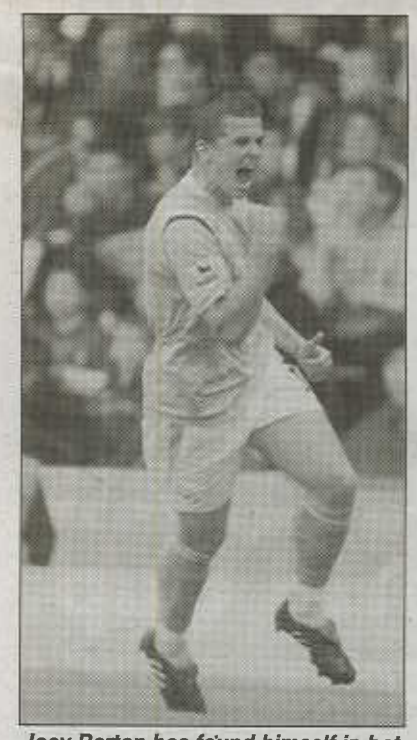
Barca are keen to resolve the matter and are continuing to negotiate with Ronaldinho's brother and agent Roberto de Assis on a contract extension.

"I am calm and I am only thinking about having a good pre-season, everything else is in the hands of my brother. I am happy to return to my team and to start work," Ronaldinho said.

"I am happy with the contract that I have."

Brazilian forward Ronaldinho says he is happy at Barcelona despite his failure to sign a new deal.

BRAWLING BARTON FINED



Joey Barton has found himself in hot water after allegedly brawling with a fan during Manchester City's tour to Thailand.

Manchester City midfielder Joey Barton has been fined for gross misconduct following an incident in the team hotel on their Asia Trophy trip to Thailand.

The ex-England under-21 international has been fined eight weeks' wages, including two weeks carried over from a suspended fine after a disciplinary hearing in December last year, City announced on their official website.

Barton has also agreed to a rehabilitation programme in a bid to prevent such incidents taking place again following his alleged brawl with a teenage Everton fan in a hotel bar, after which the midfielder was sent home.

"Joey has expressed his deep and sincere remorse over the incident and is keen to make amends to this football club and our fans who expect the highest standard of behaviour from our players," club spokesman Paul Tyrrell told the website.

"He has apologised to those involved and has accepted his fine unquestioningly."

Barton, 23, added: "I understand the distress I have caused to everybody concerned and want to apologise for my actions. I am grateful for the support I have received from the club and my friends and family."

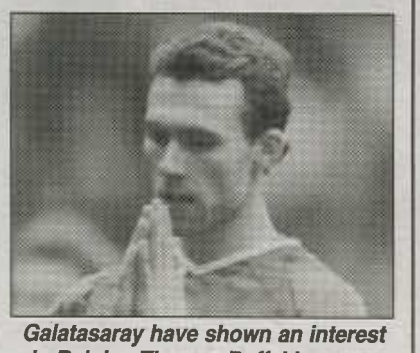
RANGERS REJECT BUFFEL SALE

Rangers have rejected a bid from Turkish club Galatasaray for Thomas Buffel.

The Turkish club are understood to have offered around £4million for the 24-year-old Belgian playmaker.

Galatasaray are managed by former Belgium international Eric Gerets, who had made Buffel, who joined in January from Feyenoord, a top target.

Rangers stood firm however as the player discovered Galatasaray's interest through his agent. "I know there was an approach and Rangers rejected it," Buffel told the Evening Times.



Galatasaray have shown an interest in Belgian Thomas Buffel however Rangers have rejected their advances.

WOODGATE READY FOR LONG AWAITED RETURN

Real Madrid defender Jonathan Woodgate is set to join the rest of his team mates in their pre-season training camp in Austria last this week after entering the final stage of recovery from a long-term thigh injury.

The doctor supervising the 25-year-old said that reports that he had suffered a recurrence of an injury that has kept him on the sidelines for over a year were completely untrue and that the England international was close to regaining full fitness.

ìFor the last four months or so he has been completing his programme very well and has progressed particularly well in the past few weeks," Doctor Jesus Olmo told the club's website last week.

"We are very pleased with his progression and it is certainly not true that he has had a recurrence of the injury."

Woodgate, who joined Real from Newcastle United for close to 20 million euros last August, has not played a competitive game since tearing a muscle in his thigh in a Premier League match against Chelsea in April 2004.

He was scheduled to make his debut for Real last October but suffered a recurrence of the injury in training and despite assurances that he would play before the end of the season he did not make an appearance for the club.

Jonathan Woodgate is set to join his Real Madrid teammates in their pre-season training camp in Austria.

BALLACK VOTED GERMANY'S BEST

Bayern Munich's Michael Ballack was voted German Player of the Year in a poll conducted by Kicker magazine.

Bayern Munich midfielder Michael Ballack picked up another accolade when he was named German Player of the Year in a poll conducted by Kicker magazine.

The Germany captain collected 516 votes from German journalists with Cologne striker and international team-mate Lukas Podolski his nearest rival with 103 votes.

Ballack, 28, was a driving force for Bayern last season helping the Bavarian giants to a league and cup double.

Bayern manager Felix Magath collected the German Manager of the Year award winning 433 votes after winning the double in his first season at the club.

Mainz handler Jurgen Klopp finished just behind Magath receiving 328 votes for keeping the minnows in the German top-flight against all the odds.

Chelsea have denied making a reported 60 million pound bid for AC Milan striker Andriy Shevchenko.

CHELSEA DENY AUDACIOUS BID FOR SHEVA

English champions Chelsea have ruled a reported 60 million pound bid for AC Milan's European Player of the Year Andriy Shevchenko as "totally incorrect".

Manager Jose Mourinho has repeatedly claimed he has only one transfer target remaining this summer - Lyon midfielder Michael Essien.

And the Stamford Bridge club reiterated that view while categorically rejecting any possibility of a move for Shevchenko.

Chelsea director of communications Simon Greenberg told the club website: "It is club policy not to comment on speculation linking Chelsea to players. However there are continuing, and totally incorrect, reports regarding Andriy Shevchenko that only serve to unnecessarily destabilise those players already at Chelsea.

MILITO STAYS WITH ZARAGOZA

Gabriel Milito has ended months of speculation after resigning with Real Zaragoza until 2010.

Argentine defender Gabriel Milito has extended his contract with Spanish first division club Zaragoza until 2010, the club's official website stated.

The 24-year-old, who was under contract with the La Liga side until 2007, has been a transfer target for Liverpool's Rafael Benitez according to some Spanish newspapers.

Zaragoza made Milito's contract extension a priority following the transfer of their international striker David Villa to Valencia.

The club is also hoping to keep the services of another Argentine international, Luciano Galletti, as the 25-year-old is being targeted by Atletico Madrid.

The Madrid side are looking for a replacement for Denmark's Jesper Gronkjaer who is close to a move to VFB Stuttgart.

WORLD NEWS

BLATTER PUSHES FOR MORE LOCAL PLAYERS

FIFA boss Sepp Blatter vowed to fight on for a "six plus five" system to stop clubs fielding so many foreign players, while his counterpart at UEFA Lennart Johansson urged the EU to let football govern itself.

Sepp Blatter has vowed to fight on for a system where clubs can have no more than five foreign players in their team.

Blatter wants clubs to be forced to play a minimum of six players eligible to represent the national team of the relevant country, with a maximum of five foreign players making up the numbers.

Johansson and Bayern Munich chief Franz Beckenbauer, joining Blatter at a conference in Munich, expressed doubts over the practicalities but Blatter said he would continue to press the issue and urged others to join him in the fight.

"The right solution is six plus five but it is difficult to implement," Blatter recognised. "We need time and patience and we have to be tough. I'm not going to give up."

UEFA had a similar system until 1995 when the Bosman ruling demolished restrictions on the number of foreign players clubs could have. Now, rules regarding freedom of movement within the EU would make such a limit impossible in Europe's big leagues.

Beckenbauer, who is preparing a bid to replace Johansson when he steps down as UEFA boss, probably in 2007, said a change was needed but was doubtful about putting Blatter's plan into practice.

"The solution would be ideal but we don't live on an island," Beckenbauer said. "We're part of Europe. I don't know if Brussels would change the constitution for football.

"At Bayern Munich we sometimes only have two or three Germans in the team, while in England and Spain there are some teams who don't have any (home players). That can't go on."

From the 2006-07 season, clubs playing in the Champions League and UEFA Cup will have to include at least two players they have trained themselves and two more trained in the same national association, with that number rising in future years.

SAVIOLA LOOKS TO SOLVE BARCA FUTURE

Argentine striker Javier Saviola returned to Barcelona Last week after a season-long loan at Monaco hoping to resolve his future as soon as possible.

Barca coach Frank Rijkaard has said the former River Plate player is surplus to requirements but the Spanish champions have yet to find a buyer for the 23-year-old international.

"At the moment I'm still a Barcelona player and have two years left to run on my contract," Saviola told a news conference at the Nou Camp.

"But it isn't an easy situation for either me or the club and I want to find a solution that suits both parties as quickly as possible.

"If I stay I think I should have the same chance as anyone else of playing and if I leave it should be to improve as a player."

"I would like to have a season in which I can have some continuity so that I can have a chance of being selected. It has always been a dream of mine to go to the World Cup."

In addition to Saviola, Barca have three other strikers on their books, last season's top scorer Samuel Eto'o, Sweden international Henrik Larsson and Argentine youngster Maxi Lopez.

Argentine striker Javier Saviola has returned to Barcelona but is not expected to stay for long.

KOREAS TO HOLD UNIFICATION MATCHES

North and South Korea will hold 'unification' matches next month between their national teams at Seoul, a South Korean government official said.

A men's match is scheduled to take place at Seoul World Cup Stadium on August 14, while the women's teams will meet on August 16, Yang Jeong-hwa, a spokeswoman for the Unification Ministry said.

The agreement was reached during two days of inter-Korean talks at Kaesong, a North Korean city near the border.

The two Koreas are expected to jointly celebrate the 60th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule, which falls on August 15.

Italian Alessio Tacchinardi has agreed to a one year deal with Spanish club Villarreal.

VILLARREAL SECURE TACCHINARDI

Former Italian international midfielder Alessio Tacchinardi has signed a one-year deal with Villarreal.

The experienced 30-year-old, who began his career at Atalanta, joins Villarreal after 11 years at Juventus where he won five league championships, one Italian Cup, the European Super Cup and the World Club Cup.

He did not play in the final when Juventus won the Champions League in 1996, but was involved in their defeats in the 1997, 1998 and 2003 finals.

Villarreal are in the third qualifying round of the Champions League after finishing in a best ever third place in the Primera Liga last season.

As well as Tacchinardi the club have also signed Argentine goalkeeper Mariano Barbosa and Ecuador midfielder Antonio Valencia to strengthen their squad in the close season.

Australian cricket coach wants Sir Alex meeting

Australian cricket coach John Buchanan is seeking an idea swapping meeting with Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson.

A noted tactician who is always keen to pursue new coaching methods, Buchanan is also keen to share ideas on training programs and player performance with another high profile sporting knight, Sir Clive Woodward.

Woodward, the man who coached England to victory in the 2003 rugby World Cup, has switched codes to work as a technical director with Southampton.

Buchanan said Cricket Australia had been trying for about nine months to organise a meeting with Ferguson, who had been a "little bit elusive".

However, the Australians will be at Old Trafford in Manchester for the third Ashes Test next month.

And Buchanan was hopeful the Red Devils might take up the offer of a meeting.

"We don't know until we get there if we can learn something from them or they can learn something from us," Buchanan said.

"Hopefully it's a two-way street."

"There's different levels of exchange and how that benefits you - you sit back and reflect a little bit about some of the things that they do and how that might work in your team."

New Espanyol signing Pablo Zabaleta captained the Argentine U/20 team which won the World Youth Championship earlier this year.

ZABALETA ELECTS ESPANYOL

Argentine midfielder Pablo Zabaleta has joined Espanyol on a five-year deal from San Lorenzo for a transfer fee of $3 million, the Primera Liga club confirmed.

Zabaleta captained the Argentine under-20 team which won the World Youth Championship this year by beating Nigeria 2-1 in the final in the Netherlands.

Espanyol finished fifth last season, qualifying for a place in the UEFA Cup.

Montella targets 2006 World Cup

AS Roma forward Vincenzo Montella has publicly declared a burning desire to make Marcello Lippiís World Cup squad, should the Azzurri qualify.

"My target for the campaign is to make sure that I reach the World Cup Finals in Germany," stated the Roma player.

Following an outstanding season last term, which resulted in 21 Serie A goals, Montella has been given the club Vice-captaincy ahead of youngster Antonio Cassano and has also forced his way back into international contention in recent gatherings.

When questioned as to who he would be likely to encounter in the race for the leading marksman award this season, Montella was in no doubt as to who he was up against.

"Who will be my rivals in the scoring charts? I see the same names as usual such as Andriy Shevchenko and the rest. I don't see any surprises."

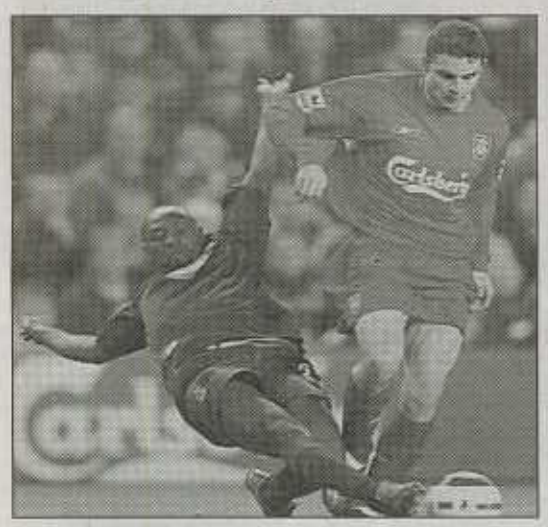
Asked if Roma could overcome the recent problems associated with an enforced transfer embargo, 'The little aeroplane,' was defiant.

"A lot of things have changed but we are working well with new boss Luciano Spalletti," he stated.

Vincenzo Montella: AS Roma star has targeted the Italian World Cup side in 2006

WORLD NEWS

NUNEZ NEW SIGNING FOR CELTA



Former Liverpool midfielder Antonio Nunez (right) has signed with newly promoted Primera Liga side Celta Vigo.

Liverpool's Spanish midfielder Antonio Nunez has signed a three-year deal with newly promoted Primera Liga side Celta Vigo.

Nunez joined Liverpool from Real Madrid last August as part of the deal which took England striker Michael Owen in the opposite direction.

He injured knee ligaments almost as soon as he made the switch to Anfield and had to wait until late November before making his debut.

He struggled to make an impact with his new side and has been linked to a return to Spain for several months.

Celta have also recruited Argentine defender Diego Placente, Brazilian striker Fernando Baiano and Spanish forward Javi Guerrero as they rebuild their squad ahead of their return to the top flight.

McCARTHY BATTLE WITH PORTO HEATS UP

South Africa striker Benni McCarthy has raised the stakes in his face-off with Porto by telling the former European champions he will not renew his current contract which expires in two years.

"We have already discussed this point and he won't renew," his agent Rob Moore told Portuguese radio station Radio Renascenca last week.

Moore said Porto had rejected a bid for McCarthy from Blackburn Rovers but the 27-year-old was still intent on playing in the English Premiership this season.

"He still has two years left on his contract and he will play it out. He is a professional. But that doesn't mean he doesn't want another challenge," Moore said.

"On the contrary he wants to play with another club, preferably in England. But while he is with Porto he will do his job to the best of his abilities and always with a smile on his face," he added.

McCarthy, Porto's top scorer for the past two seasons, almost went to Everton last season before Porto quashed the deal at the last minute.

South Africa Benni McCarthy has told Porto he will not renew his current contract with the Portuguese club.

LYON SLAP HUGE PRICE TAG ON ESSIEN

Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas insists Chelsea will have to pay 45 million euros plus a player for Ghana international midfielder Michael Essien.

Chelsea chief executive Peter Kenyon was understood to be going to Lyon for a meeting with Aulas who has raised the stakes by demanding the 45 million euros Chelsea were prepared to pay for Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard plus a player.

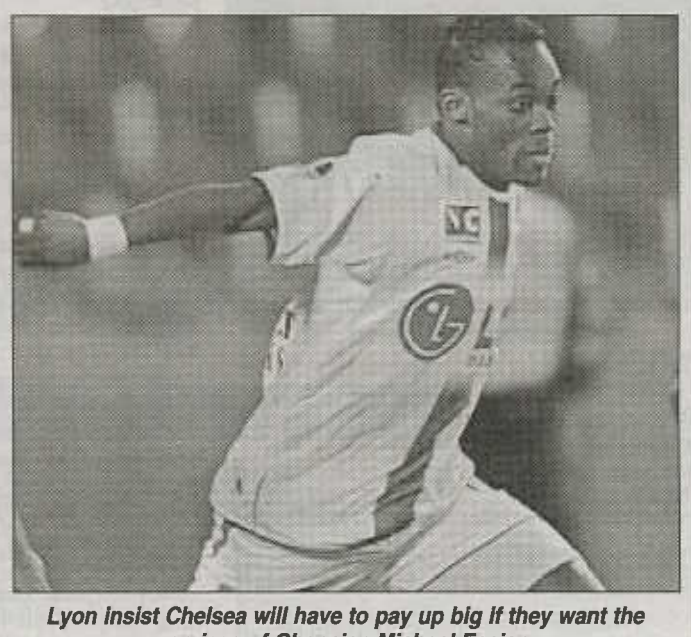
Essien refused to play in last weekís season opener Champions Trophy between the league champions and Cup winners Auxerre on which Lyon won 4-1 with a hat-trick from new Norwegian signing John Carew.

"Michael is in a vicious cycle. He didn't want to play because he didn't feel up to it," Aulas told AFP.

"But we won't let him go unless Chelsea make the same sort of offer they made for Steven Gerrard. If there was the money available for Gerrard then there must be for Essien, who's younger. You have to stop treating French clubs like jokers."

And he added: "As Chelsea have wasted time we don't have time to recruit a replacement so they'll have to give us a player on top of the money."

"The price for Michael is Steven Gerrard's price plus a player. Jose Mourinho knows exactly who we want. It's up to him to make a move. He'd be better off calling me rather than calling Michael and putting him under pressure," Aulas said.



Lyon insist Chelsea will have to pay up big if they want the services of Ghanaian Michael Essien.

BRAZILIAN LEGEND PASSES AWAY

Brazilian football legend Jair Rosa Pinto who was known as "Master Jaja" has died at the age of 84 at his home here after suffering from a lung related disease.

Jaja, who gave advice to players like Pele and Didi, was known for his small feet but it failed to hinder his talent as he was the player who invented the dead ball free-kick and step-over.

During his final years with Santos, Jaja spent time coaching a certain youngster by the name of Pele who at 19 was already a world champion with Brazil.

Jair Rosa Pinto never experienced World Cup fame like Pele, he played 41 matches and scored 21 goals for the national team.

Jaja was a member of the Brazilian world cup team that played in the "final of all finals" at the Maracana stadium in 1950 in which they lost 2-1 against Uruguay.

He couldn't understand how they had lost after leading 1-0 and he often asked God for an explanation.

Born in 1921 in Barra Mansa, near Rio, Jaja started his career in Madureira before playing for a number of big Brazilian clubs, Flamengo, Vasco de Gama, Santos, Ponte Preta and Palmeiras with which he experienced his greatest moments on the pitch.

Brazilian legend Jair Rosa Pinto has passed away aged 84 after suffering from a lung related disease.

BARCA POST PROFIT BUT STILL IN DEBT

Spanish champions Barcelona, still running a huge debt of close to 200 million euros, made a net profit of 36.72 million euros last season.

Vice-president Ferran Soriano said the club's income from marketing, television rights, tours and membership had increased by 23 percent to 208 million euros.

Soriano added that control of costs had enabled Barcelona to make an initial profit of 18 million euros.

Last season's additional profit was generated by the sale of part of the Can Rigalt estate which had been bought for the club by former president Josep Lluis Nunez in 1997.

Barcelona posted a profit of only 1.5 million euros the previous season.

Soriano explained the debt had been reduced by approximately 15 million euros over the past year and that the club hoped to cut it by a further 50 million euros next season.

Wages for players amounted to 37 percent of the club's total income which Soriano said was considerably less than the recommended 55 percent.

The Barca vice-president said next season's provision for an income of 240 million euros included an estimated 15 million euros for the club to carry shirt advertising for the first time in their history.

But he said negotiations to conclude a sponsorship deal with Chinese authorities to advertise the 2008 Beijing Olympics had not progressed as expected and the club were now considering other options.

LJUNGBERG SECURES HIGHBURY FUTURE

Arsenal midfielder Freddie Ljungberg has committed his long-term future to the club by extending his contract until summer 2009.

While Patrick Vieira has departed this summer and Robert Pires remains circumspect with regards to his future, the news that Ljungberg is staying with the Gunners will be warmly received.

The Swedish international's existing contract had been due to expire next summer, but by signing on for a further three years the 28-year-old has signalled his intention to remain with the FA Cup winners into his thirties.

"I've been at Arsenal nearly seven years now and am really happy to have signed a new contract with the club," Ljungberg told www.arsenal.com.

"I'm looking forward to the new season, to winning more trophies and also to playing in our new stadium in 2006."

Ljungberg cost Arsenal £3million when he arrived from Swedish side Halmstad in September 1998, and he has been one of Arsene Wenger's most astute signings.

YANEV BEATEN ON STREET

Bulgaria midfielder Hristo Yanev was injured in an attack outside his home after returning from CSKA Sofia's 2-0 win in Albania in the Champions League.

Yanev, Bulgaria's Footballer of the 2004/2005 season, told local Focus agency he had been beaten up by three men but no money or documents had been stolen.

Yanev set up both CSKA's goals against SK Tirana in the first leg of the second qualifying round.

"Everything was planned. I have injuries over my face and hands" he said.

"Hristo Yanev ... has been for medical checks at the hospital and was immediately released. He has not submitted a complaint to the police," an Interior Ministry spokeswoman said.

CSKA Sofia's Hristo Yanev was attacked by three men outside his home.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUALIFYING ROUND 2 — LEG 1

CELTIC CRUSHED AS REDS ROLL

Gordon Strachan was humiliated in his first game as Celtic manager when his team lost 5-0 at Artmedia Petrzalka of Slovakia in the first leg of their Champions League second qualifying round.

The result, one of the worst in the Scottish club's history, left Celtic facing another costly exit from Europe's most lucrative club competition in which they have consistently underperformed in recent seasons.

The 1967 European champions fell behind just before half-time when Juraj Halenar, who went on to complete a hat-trick, put Artmedia in front.

In the second half the Slovakian side ran riot, scoring further goals through Blažej Vascak, Halenar (twice) and Martin Mikulic.

Anderlecht's Nenad Jestrovic celebrates after scoring against Neftchi Baku.

The pick of the goals was Halenar's second, a superb volley straight from a corner, and Celtic's misery was compounded by a suspected cheekbone fracture suffered by striker Chris Sutton.

"I'm still in shock," former Southampton manager Strachan was quoted as saying by the BBC. "None of those players will ever forget that performance.

"Embarrassment is the strongest emotion right now and it's difficult to look anyone in the eye."

European champions Liverpool stepped up a gear to snuff out Lithuania's FBK Kaunas, recovering from a goal down to take a 3-1 lead into the return leg this week at Anfield.

A goal midway through the first half from Giedrius Barevicius gave the Premier League side the wake-up call they needed.

Rafa Benitez's side were behind for only six minutes as French striker Djibril Cisse reacted quickly to a knock down from his partner Peter Crouch to hook home. Three minutes later Jamie Carragher headed in Steven Gerrard's corner, his first goal for six years, and the threat from Kaunas evaporated.

Gerrard made and scored the third goal nine minutes after halftime, converting a penalty.

"It was a difficult game but in the end it's a good result for us," Benitez said.

"We had the game under control, we made one mistake but we had many chances."

Security was high in Nicosia where Cypriot side Anorthosis Famagusta scored twice in the final seven minutes to secure a historic 3-1 victory over Turkey's Trabzonspor.

It was the first match between teams from the two countries in more than three decades, with some 1,500 Turkish Cypriot fans segregated from the rest of the crowd, cordoned off with reels of barbed wire and police. Bart Goor scored one goal and set up another as Anderlecht cruised past Neftchi Baku of Azerbaijan 5-0, while Brondby will take a healthy lead back to Denmark after a 2-0 victory over Dinamo Tbilisi.

Seasoned Champions League campaigners Dynamo Kiev were left with work to do in the second leg after Switzerland's FC Thun twice came from behind to earn a 2-2 draw in Ukraine.

Shelbourne held Romania's Steaua Bucharest, the 1986 European champions, 0-0 in Ireland.

Serbian striker Igor Bogdanovic scored twice as Hungarian champions Debrecen upset Croatia's Hajduk Split 3-0.

Luxembourg's F91 Dudelange suffered a 6-1 thrashing at home by Austria's Rapid Vienna, effectively ending their hopes of reaching the third qualifying round. Muhammet Akagunduz scored a hat-trick for Rapid.

RESULTS

Artmedia Petrzalka (Slovakia)	5	Celtic (Scotland)	0
Debrecen (Hungary)	3	Hajduk Split (Croatia)	0
F91 Dudelange (Luxembourg)	1	Rapid Vienna (Austria)	6
Malmo (Sweden)	3	Maccabi Haifa (Israel)	2
Partizan Belgrade (Scg)	1	Sherif Tiraspol (Moldova)	0
Rabotnicki Skopje (Macedonia)	1	Lokomotiv Moscow (Russia)	1
Shelbourne (Rep of Ireland)	0	Steaua Bucharest (Romania)	0
SK Tirane (Albania)	0	CSKA Sofia (Bulgaria)	2
BK Kaunas (LIT)	1	Liverpool (ENG)	3
Dinamo Tbilissi (GEO)	0	Brondby IF (DEN)	2
Dynamo Kiev (UKR)	2	Thun (SUI)	2
Anorthosis (CYP)	3	Trabzonspor (TUR)	1
Anderlecht (BEL)	5	Neftchi (AZE)	0
Valerenga (NOR)	1	Haka (FIN)	0

Second Legs — August 2 & 3

Third Round Qualifying Draw

*FC Basel 1893 (SUI) v Werder Bremen (GER)
*FC Artmedia Bratislava (SVK) / Celtic FC (SCO) v FK
*Partizan (SCG) / FC Sheriff (MDA)
*FC Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) v FC Internazionale Milano (ITA)
*Shelbourne FC (IRL) / FC Steaua Bucuresti (ROU) v Rosenborg BK (NOR)
*Manchester United (ENG) v Debreceni VSC (HUN) / HNK Hajduk Split (CRO)
*Malmö FF (SWE) / Maccabi Haifa FC (ISR) v FC Dynamo Kyiv (UKR) / FC Thun (SUI)
*Everton FC (ENG) v Villarreal CF (ESP)
*FBK Kaunas (LTU) / Liverpool FC (ENG, holders) v KF Tirana (ALB) / PFC CSKA Sofia (BUL)
*Sporting Clube de Portugal (POR) v Udinese Calcio (ITA)
*Valerenga IF (NOR) /FC Haka (FIN) v Club Brugge KV (BEL)
F91 Dudelange (LUX) / SK
*Rapid Wien (AUT) v FK Rabotnicki (MKD) / FC Lokomotiv Moskva (RUS)
*RSC Anderlecht (BEL) / PFC Neftchi (AZE) v SK Slavia Praha (CZE)
*Anorthosis Famagusta FC (CYP) / Trabzonspor (TUR) v Rangers FC (SCO)
*FC Dinamo Tbilisi (GEO) / Brøndby IF (DEN) v AFC Ajax (NED)
*Real Betis Balompié (ESP) v AS Monaco FC (FRA)
*Wisła Kraków (POL) v Panathinaikos FC (GRE)

The prestigious Champions League trophy won by Liverpool last year

*** First-leg matches: 9/10 August**
Second-leg matches: 23/24 August

INTERTOTO CUP SEMI FINAL — LEG 1

Advantage Deportivo

Goals from striker Ruben Castro and defender Jorge Andrade gave Deportivo Coruna a 2-1 victory over Newcastle United in the first leg of an Intertoto Cup semi-final at the Riazor.

The English side were given hope of turning the tie around in this week's second leg at St James' Park thanks to a thundering volley from midfielder Lee Bowyer.

Primera Liga side Deportivo gained an early reward for fielding an attacking line-up when young striker Castro steered home past keeper Shay Given in the 11th minute after lively winger Pedro Munitis had skipped down the right and slipped a neat pass into the area.

Newcastle, who beat Slovakian side Dubnica 5-1 on aggregate in the previous round, were unable to find their rhythm against the Galicians.

But Graeme Souness's men hit back against the run of play three minutes into the second half when Bowyer smashed home with an unstoppable left-foot volley after Diego Tristan had half-cleared a corner.

Depor restored their lead 10 minutes later when Portugal centre back Jorge Andrade made the most of some half-hearted Newcastle defending to stride forward from inside his own half before calmly curling the ball low into the corner of the net to make it 2-1.

The winner of the tie will face the winner of the semi-final between Lazio and Olympique Marseille, which is all locked up at 1-1.

Abdoulaye Meite scored a potentially crucial away goal midway through the second half to give Marseille a useful away goal.

The home side took the lead through Paolo Di Canio just before the break, but Meite ensured the scores ended level to give Marseille every chance of moving on after this Wednesday's return in France.

Meanwhile Bundesliga side VfL Wolfsburg were held to a goalless draw by Lens.

Suffering from some early-season sluggishness, neither side managed to eke out the advantage at the Volkswagen Arena and the few chances that were created at all went begging, meaning the teams go into the return leg at the Felix-Bollaert level-pegging.

Franck Ribery of Marseille (left) clashes with Lazio's Paolo Di Canio (Second Left) as Lazio's Abdoulaye Meite (right) try to pull them apart.

RESULTS

Deportivo La Coruna (ESP)	2	Newcastle (ENG)	1
Wolfsburg (GER)	0	Lens (FRA)	0
Lazio (ITA)	1	Marseille (FRA)	1
Zalgiris Vilnius (LIT)	1	Cluj (ROM)	2
Valencia (ESP)	4	Roda Kerkrade (NED)	0
Sigma Olomouc (CZE)	0	Hamburg (GER)	1

Second Legs - August 3

UEFA Cup Qualifiers

MTZ-RIPO Minsk 1 Ferencvaros 2, FC MIKA 0 Mainz 0, Khazar Lenkoran 1 Nistru Otaci 2, Lok.Tbilisi 0 Banants Yerevan 2, MyPa 1 TVMK Tallinn 0, Ventspils 2 Linfield 1, Atlantas 3 Rhyl 2, Dacia Chisinau 1 Vaduz 0, NK Domzale 3 Domagnano 0, Flora Tallinn 0 Esbjerg 6, L. Metalurgs 3 NSI Runavik 0, CS Pétange1 AC Allianssi 1 APOEL Nicosia 4 Birkirkara 0, BATE Borisov 5 Torpedo Kutaisi 0, Viking 1 Portadown 0, Rapid Bucuresti 5 Sant Julia 0, B36 Torshavn 2 Vestmannaeyar 1, NK Zepce 1 Baskimi 1, Vardar Skopje 0 Elbasani 0, Zilina 3 FK Baku 1, Siroki Brijeg3 Teuta Durres 0, Carmarthen 5 Longford Town 1, Cork City 0 Ekranas 1, Hibernians 0 Omonia Nicosia 3, Keflavik 2 Etzella Ettelbruck 0.

UEFA Cup Second Round Qualifying Draw

NK Inter Zapreic (CRO) v FK Crvena Zvezda (SCG)
FK Baskimi (MKD) v Maccabi Petach-Tikva FC (ISR)
FC Dinamo Bucuresti (ROU) v AC Omonia (CYP)
PFC Lokomotiv Plovdiv (BUL) v OFK Beograd (SCG)
APOEL FC (CYP) v Maccabi Tel-Aviv FC (ISR)
PFC Litex Lovech (BUL) v HNK Rijeka (CRO)
FC Vaduz (LIE) v Besiktas JK (TUR)
FK Vardar (MKD) v AFC Rapid Bucuresti (ROU)
NK Publikim (SLO) v PFC Levski Sofia (BUL)
FK Zeta (SCG) v NK _iroki Brijeg (BIH)
NK Dom_ale (SLO) v FC Ashdod (ISR)
FC Krylya Sovetov Samara (RUS) v FC BATE Borisov (BLR)
MFC Sopron (HUN) v FC Metalurh Donetsk (UKR)
Wisla Plock (POL) v Grasshopper-Club (SUI)
FC Nistru Otaci (MOL) v Grazer AK (AUT)
FK Austria Wien (AUT) v MK ilina (SVK)
SV Pasching (AUT) v FC Zenit St. Petersburg (RUS)
FC MTZ-RIPO Minsk (BLR) v FK Teplice (CZE)
Groclin Grodzisk Wielkopolski (POL) v FK Dukla Banská Bystrica (SVK)
FC Banants (ARM) v FC Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk (UKR)
Legia Warszawa (POL) v FC Zürich (SUI)
Halmstads BK (SWE) v Linfield FC (NIR)
FC Midtjylland (DEN) v B36 Torshavn (FAR)
SK Brann (NOR) v AC Allianssi (FIN)
FHK Liepajas Metalurgs (LAT) v KRC Genk (BEL)
Viking FK (NOR) v Rhyl FC (WAL)
Myllykosken Pallo-47 (FIN) v Dundee United FC (SCO)
Carmarthen Town AFC (WAL) v FC København (DEN)
FSV Mainz 05 (GER) v Keflavík (ISL)
Djurgårdens IF (SWE) v Cork City FC (IRL)
Esbjerg fB (DEN) v Tromso IL (NOR)

the UEFA Cup

First-leg matches: 11 August
Second-leg matches: 25 August
Ties subject to reversal

Scottish Premier League

Hoops boss admits to worries

Celtic, hammered 5-0 by Artmedia Petrzalka in midweek, suffered fresh misery when they blew a 3-1 lead to draw 4-4 at Motherwell in the opening game of the season in the Scottish Premier League on Saturday.

New Celtic manager Gordon Strachan watched his team being soundly beaten in their Champions League second qualifying round first leg tie in Slovakia on Wednesday.

Motherwell striker Scotty McDonald scored in his side's four-all draw against Celtic

But Strachan, who took over from Martin O'Neill in May, was in a much better frame of mind after Welsh striker John Hartson hit a hat-trick to give Celtic a 3-1 halftime lead at Motherwell.

Brian Kerr was on target for the home side in the first half and two goals inside a minute after the interval by Australian striker Scott McDonald and Jim Hamilton pulled them level.

William Kinniburgh put Motherwell 4-3 ahead after 85 minutes before Craig Beattie equalised for Celtic in stoppage time.

Strachan was unhappy with his team's defending.

'It's really obvious we have to sort it (the defence) out, (although) it is too early to be talking about getting rid of players,' he told BBC Radio Scotland.

'But defensively it didn't work. So we have to think of something else for Tuesday (the second leg against Artmedia).

'In an attacking sense it is a ray of hope that we can score four goals. We don't want to panic, that would be the worst thing to do.'

Motherwell manager Terry Butcher said: 'It was a great game and a great advert for the Scottish game.

'I was a little late getting into the dressing room at halftime and the boys were having a go at each other, so it

Celtic conceded the title to Old Firm rivals Rangers in the last few minutes of the final game of last season, going down 2-1 at Motherwell after leading for most of the match.

New Hearts boss George Burley celebrated an opening day win with a 4-2 victory at Kilmarnock.

Ten-man Hibernian drew 1-1 at home to Dunfermline despite having Scott Brown sent off for two bookable offences.

Promoted Falkirk suffered a 2-0 home defeat by Inverness Caledonian Thistle. Caley player-manager Craig Brewster grabbed both goals in the second half.

In the other SPL clash Dundee United drew 1-1 with visiting Aberdeen. Lee Miller, an Aberdeen transfer target, grabbed the opener for United after five minutes before Barry Nicholson levelled three minutes into the second half.

Scottish Premier League champions Rangers FC eased themselves into the new season with a comfortable 3-0 victory over Livingston FC at Ibrox on Sunday.

After finishing last season with 18 goals to his name, Dado Prso picked up where he left off, converting a rebound on 22 minutes after goalkeeper Roddy MacKenzie could only parry Alex Rae's shot.

Jose Pierre-Fanfan then doubled the lead from close range seven minutes after the interval. The afternoon was to get worse for Livingston, as they were reduced to ten men when Richard Brittain was dismissed on 74 minutes, before Peter Lovenkrands sealed an easy win with a third goal in added time.

Hearts striker Paul Hartley was on song from the penalty spot against Kilmarnock

RESULTS

Dundee United	1	Aberdeen	1
Falkirk	0	Caledonian Thistle	2
Hibernian	1	Dunfermline Athletic	1
Kilmarnock	2	Heart of Midlothian	4
Motherwell	4	Glasgow Celtic	4
Rangers	3	Livingston	0

TABLES

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hearts	1	1	0	0	4	2	3
Rangers	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Inverness CT	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Celtic	1	0	1	0	4	4	1
Motherwell	1	0	1	0	4	4	1
Aberdeen	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Dundee Utd	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Dunfermline	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Hibernian	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Livingston	1	0	0	1	0	3	0
Kilmarnock	1	0	0	1	2	4	0
Falkirk	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

FIXTURES

Saturday, August 6
Aberdeen v Kilmarnock
Celtic v Dundee Utd
Inverness CT v Rangers
Livingston v Falkirk
Motherwell v Dunfermline

Sunday, August 7
Hearts v Hibernian

French Ligue 1

Lille lifted by Makoun header

UEFA Champions League hopefuls LOSC Lille Métropole opened their 2005/06 Ligue 1 campaign with a 1-0 victory at home to Stade Rennais FC.

Lille finished a credible second last term, but fully 12 points behind champions Olympique Lyonnais, and they put some early pressure on their rivals with a narrow win. Jean Makoun scored the only goal of the game eight minutes before the interval, heading a rebound after Andreas Isaksson could only parry new signing Hicham Aboucherouane's blistering free-kick.

PSG's Jerome Rothen scored a brace against Metz

The goal finished a frantic start to the game which saw Renne striker Alexander Frei - Ligue 1's top scorer last term - miss a host of opportunities. He could have made up for the misses late on but was equally profligate as Lille joined six other sides on maximum points.

Paris Saint-Germain FC have the edge on goal difference following their 4-1 win over FC Metz, but FC Girondins de Bordeaux enjoyed perhaps the most impressive victory so far, beating Olympique de Marseille

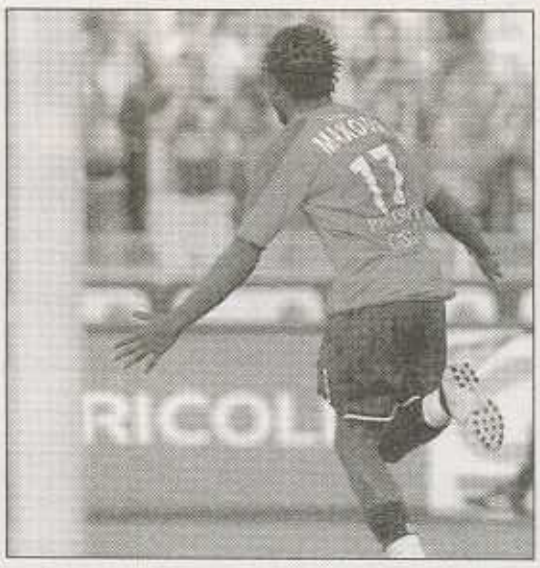
2-0. Julien Faubert broke the deadlock on 16 minutes and when Frédéric Déhu was dismissed after half-time, there was no way back for the UEFA Intertoto Cup semi-finalists. Pierre Ducasse then sealed victory three minutes before the end.

There were more red cards at La Meinau stadium, as both RC Strasbourg and AJ Auxerre ended with ten men. Both sides look rusty as the game meandered towards a goalless draw, livened only by the first-half dismissal of Auxerre's Omar Kalabane.

Another Tunisian, Francileudo Santos made a more telling impact for Toulouse FC against FC Sochaux-Montbéliard, the side he left during the summer, scoring the only goal of the game on 14 minutes. AS Monaco FC defeated AS Nancy-Lorraine by the same scoreline thanks to an Olivier Kapo strike midway through the second half, in a game the league newcomers ended with nine men.

Early goals from Gilles Yapi and Luigi Glombard helped FC Nantes Atlantique to a 2-0 win against RC Lens, while AS Saint-Etienne were held 0-0 at home by AC Ajaccio, and OGC Nice 1-1 by ES Troyes Aube Champagne.

John Carew scored his fourth goal in two games as Olympique Lyonnais began their Ligue 1 title defence with a hard-fought 2-1 win at newly-promoted Le Mans UC 72.



Lille's Jean Makoun turns away in delight after scoring against Stade Rennais

His 58th-minute goal came just two minutes after Tulio De Melo had cancelled out Sylvain Wiltord's opener, but there was no way back for Mans a second time.

Sylvain Wiltord's long-range effort handed the visitors the lead nine minutes before the interval.

Mans fought back well and eleven minutes after the restart they were level. A swift move involving Koffi Romaric and Daisuke Matsui ended with the Japanese midfield player crossing for new signing De Melo to head in.

Parity was fleeting, however, as the dangerous Carew rose to convert Sidney Govou's cross and Lyon held on to earn the three points as coach Gerard Houllier marked his return to Ligue 1 with victory.

RESULTS

Marseille 0-2 Bordeaux, Nice 1-1 Troyes, Lille 1-0 Rennes, Nantes 2-0 Lens, St-Etienne 0-0 Ajaccio, Sochaux 0-1 Toulouse, Strasbourg 0-0 Auxerre, Nancy 0-1 Monaco, PSG 4-1 Metz, Lyon 2 Le Mans 1

TABLES

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 PSG	1	1	0	0	4	1	3
2 Lyon	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
3 Bordeaux	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
4 Nantes	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
5 Lille	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
6 Monaco	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
7 Toulouse	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
8 Nice	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
9 Troyes	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
10 Ajaccio	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
11 Auxerre	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
12 St-Etienne	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
13 Strasbourg	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
14 Mans	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
15 Nancy	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
16 Rennes	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
17 Sochaux	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
18 Lens	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
19 Marseille	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
20 Metz	1	0	0	1	1	4	0

FIXTURES

Saturday 6th August
Lens - Marseille
Metz - Mans
Monaco - Auxerre
Sochaux - PSG
Toulouse - Nice
Troyes - St-Etienne
Bordeaux - Nancy
Ajaccio - Lille

Sunday 7th August
Rennes - Nantes
Lyon - Strasbourg

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE FIXTURES 2005/2006

THE F.A. PREMIER LEAGUE

13-AUGUST-2005
Arsenal ....-.... Newcastle
Aston Villa ....-.... Bolton
Everton ....-.... Manchester U
Fulham ....-.... Birmingham
Manchester C ....-.... West Bromwich
Middlesbrough ....-.... Liverpool
Portsmouth ....-.... Tottenham
Sunderland ....-.... Charlton
West Ham ....-.... Blackburn
Wigan ....-.... Chelsea

20-AUGUST-2005
Birmingham ....-.... Manchester C
Blackburn ....-.... Fulham
Bolton ....-.... Everton
Charlton ....-.... Wigan
Chelsea ....-.... Arsenal
Liverpool ....-.... Sunderland
Manchester U ....-.... Aston Villa
Newcastle ....-.... West Ham
Tottenham ....-.... Middlesbrough
West Bromwich ....-.... Portsmouth

23-AUGUST-2005
Arsenal ....-.... Fulham
Birmingham ....-.... Middlesbrough
Bolton ....-.... Newcastle
Charlton ....-.... Liverpool
Portsmouth ....-.... Aston Villa
Sunderland ....-.... Manchester C
Blackburn ....-.... Tottenham
Chelsea ....-.... West Bromwich
Manchester U ....-.... Wigan
Everton ....-.... West Ham

27-AUGUST-2005
Aston Villa ....-.... Blackburn
Fulham ....-.... Everton
Manchester C ....-.... Portsmouth
Middlesbrough ....-.... Charlton
Newcastle ....-.... Manchester U
Tottenham ....-.... Chelsea
West Bromwich ....-.... Birmingham
West Ham ....-.... Bolton
Wigan ....-.... Sunderland
Liverpool ....-.... Arsenal

10-SEPTEMBER-2005
Birmingham ....-.... Charlton
Bolton ....-.... Blackburn
Chelsea ....-.... Sunderland
Everton ....-.... Portsmouth
Manchester U ....-.... Manchester C
Middlesbrough ....-.... Arsenal
Newcastle ....-.... Fulham
Tottenham ....-.... Liverpool
West Bromwich ....-.... Wigan
West Ham ....-.... Aston Villa

17-SEPTEMBER-2005
Arsenal ....-.... Everton
Aston Villa ....-.... Tottenham
Blackburn ....-.... Newcastle
Charlton ....-.... Chelsea
Fulham ....-.... West Ham
Liverpool ....-.... Manchester U
Manchester C ....-.... Bolton
Portsmouth ....-.... Birmingham
Sunderland ....-.... West Bromwich
Wigan ....-.... Middlesbrough

24-SEPTEMBER-2005
Birmingham ....-.... Liverpool
Bolton ....-.... Portsmouth
Chelsea ....-.... Aston Villa
Everton ....-.... Wigan
Manchester U ....-.... Blackburn
Middlesbrough ....-.... Sunderland
Newcastle ....-.... Manchester C
Tottenham ....-.... Fulham
West Bromwich ....-.... Charlton
West Ham ....-.... Arsenal

01-OCTOBER-2005
Arsenal ....-.... Birmingham
Aston Villa ....-.... Middlesbrough
Blackburn ....-.... West Bromwich
Charlton ....-.... Tottenham
Fulham ....-.... Manchester U
Liverpool ....-.... Chelsea
Manchester C ....-.... Everton
Portsmouth ....-.... Newcastle
Sunderland ....-.... West Ham
Wigan ....-.... Bolton

15-OCTOBER-2005
Birmingham ....-.... Aston Villa
Charlton ....-.... Fulham
Chelsea ....-.... Bolton
Liverpool ....-.... Blackburn
Manchester C ....-.... West Ham
Middlesbrough ....-.... Portsmouth
Sunderland ....-.... Manchester U
Tottenham ....-.... Everton
West Bromwich ....-.... Arsenal
Wigan ....-.... Newcastle

22-OCTOBER-2005
Arsenal ....-.... Manchester C
Aston Villa ....-.... Wigan
Blackburn ....-.... Birmingham
Bolton ....-.... West Bromwich
Everton ....-.... Chelsea
Fulham ....-.... Liverpool
Manchester U ....-.... Tottenham
Newcastle ....-.... Sunderland
Portsmouth ....-.... Charlton
West Ham ....-.... Middlesbrough

29-OCTOBER-2005
Birmingham ....-.... Everton
Charlton ....-.... Bolton
Chelsea ....-.... Blackburn
Liverpool ....-.... West Ham
Manchester C ....-.... Aston Villa
Middlesbrough ....-.... Manchester U
Sunderland ....-.... Portsmouth
Tottenham ....-.... Arsenal
West Bromwich ....-.... Newcastle
Wigan ....-.... Fulham

05-NOVEMBER-2005
Arsenal ....-.... Sunderland
Aston Villa ....-.... Liverpool
Blackburn ....-.... Charlton
Bolton ....-.... Tottenham
Everton ....-.... Middlesbrough
Fulham ....-.... Manchester C
Manchester U ....-.... Chelsea
Newcastle ....-.... Birmingham
Portsmouth ....-.... Wigan
West Ham ....-.... West Bromwich

19-NOVEMBER-2005
Birmingham ....-.... Bolton
Charlton ....-.... Manchester U
Chelsea ....-.... Newcastle
Liverpool ....-.... Portsmouth
Manchester C ....-.... Blackburn
Middlesbrough ....-.... Fulham
Sunderland ....-.... Aston Villa
Tottenham ....-.... West Ham
West Bromwich ....-.... Everton
Wigan ....-.... Arsenal

26-NOVEMBER -2005
Arsenal ....-.... Blackburn
Aston Villa ....-.... Charlton
Everton ....-.... Newcastle
Fulham ....-.... Bolton
Manchester C ....-.... Liverpool
Middlesbrough ....-.... West Bromwich
Portsmouth ....-.... Chelsea
Sunderland ....-.... Birmingham
West Ham ....-.... Manchester U
Wigan ....-.... Tottenham

03-DECEMBER- 2005
Birmingham ....-.... West Ham
Blackburn ....-.... Everton
Bolton ....-.... Arsenal
Charlton ....-.... Manchester C
Chelsea ....-.... Middlesbrough
Liverpool ....-.... Wigan
Manchester U ....-.... Portsmouth
Newcastle ....-.... Aston Villa
Tottenham ....-.... Sunderland
West Bromwich ....-.... Fulham

10-DECEMBER -2005
Birmingham ....-.... Fulham
Blackburn ....-.... West Ham
Bolton ....-.... Aston Villa
Charlton ....-.... Sunderland
Chelsea ....-.... Wigan
Liverpool ....-.... Middlesbrough
Manchester U ....-.... Everton
Newcastle ....-.... Arsenal
Tottenham ....-.... Portsmouth
West Bromwich ....-.... Manchester C

17-DECEMBER-2005
Arsenal ....-.... Chelsea
Aston Villa ....-.... Manchester U
Everton ....-.... Bolton
Fulham ....-.... Blackburn
Manchester C ....-.... Birmingham
Middlesbrough ....-.... Tottenham
Portsmouth ....-.... West Bromwich
Sunderland ....-.... Liverpool
West Ham ....-.... Newcastle
Wigan ....-.... Charlton

26-DECEMBER-2005
Aston Villa ....-.... Everton
Charlton ....-.... Arsenal
Chelsea ....-.... Fulham
Liverpool ....-.... Newcastle
Manchester U ....-.... West Bromwich
Middlesbrough ....-.... Blackburn
Portsmouth ....-.... West Ham
Sunderland ....-.... Bolton
Tottenham ....-.... Birmingham
Wigan ....-.... Manchester C

28-DECEMBER-2005
Arsenal ....-.... Portsmouth
Birmingham ....-.... Manchester U
Blackburn ....-.... Sunderland
Bolton ....-.... Middlesbrough
Everton ....-.... Liverpool
Fulham ....-.... Aston Villa
Manchester C ....-.... Chelsea
Newcastle ....-.... Charlton
West Bromwich ....-.... Tottenham
West Ham ....-.... Wigan

31-DECEMBER-2005
Aston Villa ....-.... Arsenal
Charlton ....-.... West Ham
Chelsea ....-.... Birmingham
Liverpool ....-.... West Bromwich
Manchester U ....-.... Bolton
Middlesbrough ....-.... Manchester C
Portsmouth ....-.... Fulham
Sunderland ....-.... Everton
Tottenham ....-.... Newcastle
Wigan ....-.... Blackburn

02-JANUARY-2006
Arsenal ....-.... Manchester U
Birmingham ....-.... Wigan
Blackburn ....-.... Portsmouth
Bolton ....-.... Liverpool
Everton ....-.... Charlton
Fulham ....-.... Sunderland
Manchester C ....-.... Tottenham
Newcastle ....-.... Middlesbrough
West Bromwich ....-.... Aston Villa
West Ham ....-.... Chelsea

14-JANUARY-2006
Arsenal ....-.... Middlesbrough
Aston Villa ....-.... West Ham
Blackburn ....-.... Bolton
Charlton ....-.... Birmingham
Fulham ....-.... Newcastle
Liverpool ....-.... Tottenham
Manchester C ....-.... Manchester U
Portsmouth ....-.... Everton
Sunderland ....-.... Chelsea
Wigan ....-.... West Bromwich

21-JANUARY-2006
Birmingham ....-.... Portsmouth
Bolton ....-.... Manchester C
Chelsea ....-.... Charlton
Everton ....-.... Arsenal
Manchester U ....-.... Liverpool
Middlesbrough ....-.... Wigan
Newcastle ....-.... Blackburn
Tottenham ....-.... Aston Villa
West Bromwich ....-.... Sunderland
West Ham ....-.... Fulham

31-JANUARY-2006
Arsenal ....-.... West Ham
Charlton ....-.... West Bromwich
Liverpool ....-.... Birmingham
Portsmouth ....-.... Bolton
Sunderland ....-.... Middlesbrough
Wigan ....-.... Everton
Aston Villa ....-.... Chelsea
Blackburn ....-.... Manchester U
Fulham ....-.... Tottenham
Manchester C ....-.... Newcastle

04-FEBRUARY-2006
Birmingham ....-.... Arsenal
Bolton ....-.... Wigan
Chelsea ....-.... Liverpool
Everton ....-.... Manchester C
Manchester U ....-.... Fulham
Middlesbrough ....-.... Aston Villa
Newcastle ....-.... Portsmouth
Tottenham ....-.... Charlton
West Bromwich ....-.... Blackburn
West Ham ....-.... Sunderland

11-FEBRUARY-2006
Arsenal ....-.... Bolton
Aston Villa ....-.... Newcastle
Everton ....-.... Blackburn
Fulham ....-.... West Bromwich
Manchester C ....-.... Charlton
Middlesbrough ....-.... Chelsea
Portsmouth ....-.... Manchester U
Sunderland ....-.... Tottenham
West Ham ....-.... Birmingham
Wigan ....-.... Liverpool

25-FEBRUARY-2006
Birmingham ....-.... Sunderland
Blackburn ....-.... Arsenal
Bolton ....-.... Fulham
Charlton ....-.... Aston Villa
Chelsea ....-.... Portsmouth
Liverpool ....-.... Manchester C
Manchester U ....-.... West Ham
Newcastle ....-.... Everton
Tottenham ....-.... Wigan
West Bromwich ....-.... Middlesbrough

04-MARCH-2006
Aston Villa ....-.... Portsmouth
Fulham ....-.... Arsenal
Liverpool ....-.... Charlton
Manchester C ....-.... Sunderland
Middlesbrough ....-.... Birmingham
Newcastle ....-.... Bolton
Tottenham ....-.... Blackburn
West Bromwich ....-.... Chelsea
West Ham ....-.... Everton
Wigan ....-.... Manchester U

11-MARCH -2006
Arsenal ....-.... Liverpool
Birmingham ....-.... West Bromwich
Blackburn ....-.... Aston Villa
Bolton ....-.... West Ham
Charlton ....-.... Middlesbrough
Chelsea ....-.... Tottenham
Everton ....-.... Fulham
Manchester U ....-.... Newcastle
Portsmouth ....-.... Manchester C
Sunderland ....-.... Wigan

18-MARCH-2006
Arsenal ....-.... Charlton
Birmingham ....-.... Tottenham
Blackburn ....-.... Middlesbrough
Bolton ....-.... Sunderland
Everton ....-.... Aston Villa
Fulham ....-.... Chelsea
Manchester C ....-.... Wigan
Newcastle ....-.... Liverpool
West Bromwich ....-.... Manchester U
West Ham ....-.... Portsmouth

25-MARCH-2006
Aston Villa ....-.... Fulham
Charlton ....-.... Newcastle
Chelsea ....-.... Manchester C
Liverpool ....-.... Everton
Manchester U ....-.... Birmingham
Middlesbrough ....-.... Bolton
Portsmouth ....-.... Arsenal
Sunderland ....-.... Blackburn
Tottenham ....-.... West Bromwich
Wigan ....-.... West Ham

01-APRIL-2006
Arsenal ....-.... Aston Villa
Birmingham ....-.... Chelsea
Blackburn ....-.... Wigan
Bolton ....-.... Manchester U
Everton ....-.... Sunderland
Fulham ....-.... Portsmouth
Manchester C ....-.... Middlesbrough
Newcastle ....-.... Tottenham
West Bromwich ....-.... Liverpool
West Ham ....-.... Charlton

08-APRIL-.2006
Aston Villa ....-.... West Bromwich
Charlton ....-.... Everton
Chelsea ....-.... West Ham
Liverpool ....-.... Bolton
Manchester U ....-.... Arsenal
Middlesbrough ....-.... Newcastle
Portsmouth ....-.... Blackburn
Sunderland ....-.... Fulham
Tottenham ....-.... Manchester C
Wigan ....-.... Birmingham

15-APRIL-2006
Arsenal ....-.... West Bromwich
Aston Villa ....-.... Birmingham
Blackburn ....-.... Liverpool
Bolton ....-.... Chelsea
Everton ....-.... Tottenham
Fulham ....-.... Charlton
Manchester U ....-.... Sunderland
Newcastle ....-.... Wigan
Portsmouth ....-.... Middlesbrough
West Ham ....-.... Manchester C

17-APRIL-2006
Birmingham ....-.... Blackburn
Charlton ....-.... Portsmouth
Chelsea ....-.... Everton
Liverpool ....-.... Fulham
Manchester C ....-.... Arsenal
Middlesbrough ....-.... West Ham
Sunderland ....-.... Newcastle
Tottenham ....-.... Manchester U
West Bromwich ....-.... Bolton
Wigan ....-.... Aston Villa

22-APRIL-.2006
Arsenal ....-.... Tottenham
Aston Villa ....-.... Manchester C
Blackburn ....-.... Chelsea
Bolton ....-.... Charlton
Everton ....-.... Birmingham
Fulham ....-.... Wigan
Manchester U ....-.... Middlesbrough
Newcastle ....-.... West Bromwich
Portsmouth ....-.... Sunderland
West Ham ....-.... Liverpool

29-APRIL -2006
Birmingham ....-.... Newcastle
Charlton ....-.... Blackburn
Chelsea ....-.... Manchester U
Liverpool ....-.... Aston Villa
Manchester C ....-.... Fulham
Middlesbrough ....-.... Everton
Sunderland ....-.... Arsenal
Tottenham ....-.... Bolton
West Bromwich ....-.... West Ham
Wigan ....-.... Portsmouth

07-MAY-2006
Arsenal ....-.... Wigan
Aston Villa ....-.... Sunderland
Blackburn ....-.... Manchester C
Bolton ....-.... Birmingham
Everton ....-.... West Bromwich
Fulham ....-.... Middlesbrough
Manchester U ....-.... Charlton
Newcastle ....-.... Chelsea
Portsmouth ....-.... Liverpool
West Ham ....-.... Tottenham